Famous Artists Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Principles of experimental design

Lesson 18

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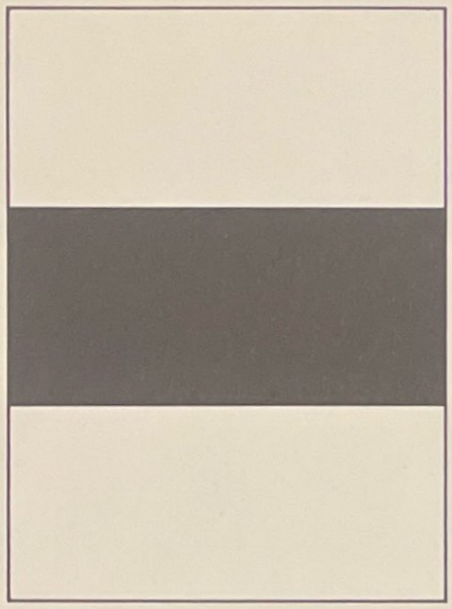

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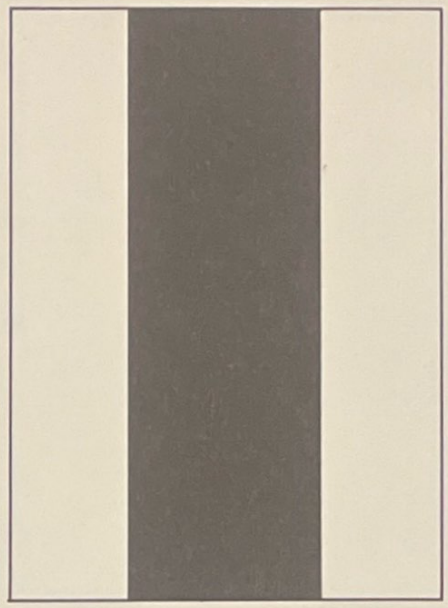

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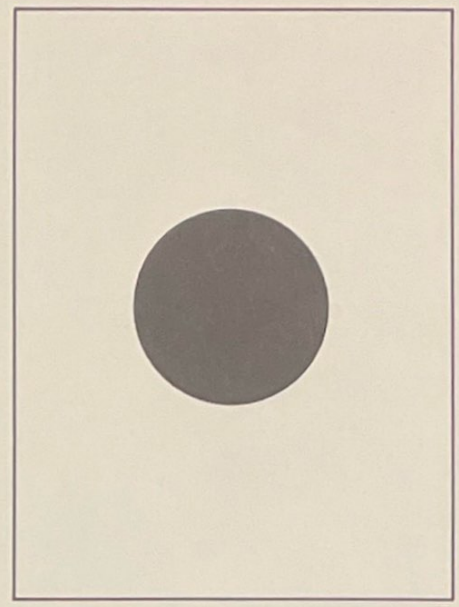
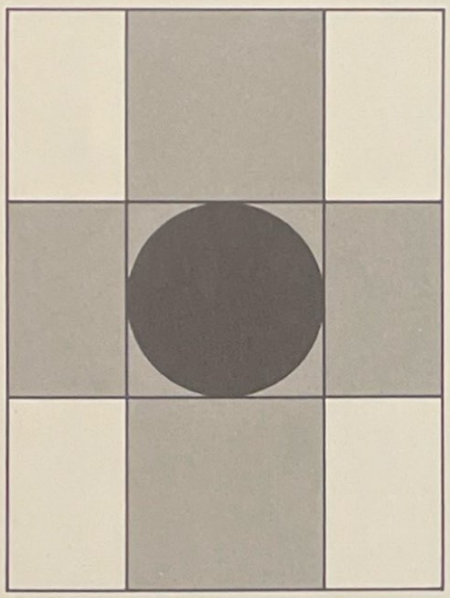
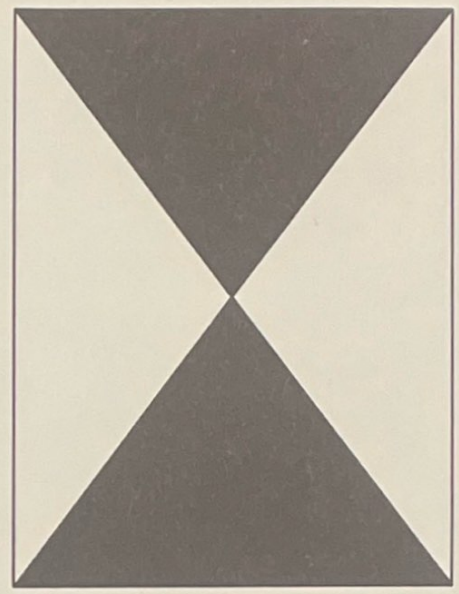


Centered



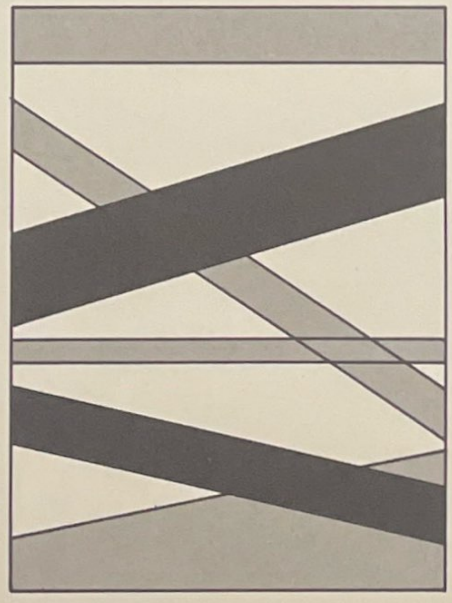
Combination

These diagrams show you sound, basic ways to arrange design elements within a space. You can apply the same principles to areas of different sizes and proportions — such as wide and horizontal, tall and vertical, or perfectly square. Your pictorial material and the copy may not fit these diagrams exactly, but the basic structure you see here does provide a foundation for the more detailed and finished designs.



Hourglass

Diagonal



Irregular

Nongeometric

Layout and design are based on the same principles as those you have been using to compose pictures. What you have learned about area, line, value, balance, etc., also applies to this lesson. The only difference here is that you will learn how to lay out the whole page — the copy and headline as well as the illustrations or designs.

Principles of experimental design — Giusti (George Giusti)

The artist who specializes in layout or design is very much like a builder. And his layout or design problem is similar to one in construction. The proportions, weights of the elements, harmony of materials and details — all must blend perfectly to produce a beautiful structure, whether it is a house, a package design, a picture, or a layout for an advertisement.

The designer, like the builder, must first find a solid footing for his basic idea. He builds his construction on firm foundations. He divides his space into logical sections. He beautifies his structure, not with useless frills, but with all the richness of the simple materials used. The texture of concrete reminds us of gesso. The quality of glass suggests the smooth, transparent tints or washes used by a skillful artist.

The basic principles of design and layout are both simple and ancient. The early Chinese, Egyptians and Greeks all faced the same problem — how to create the most effective design for a given space. The Greek artist worked long and thoughtfully to produce the perfect design for an urn of a certain shape. The contemporary designer faces exactly the same challenge — but his area may be a magazine cover that measures 11 by 14 inches, on which he must create something symbolic of spring.

The Greek artist didn't know he was creating such lasting beauty, but he must have felt the same deep, inner reward as the designer of today who knows that his creation is sound and aesthetically valid, and that it communicates his message — whether it is on a magazine cover, a book jacket or an advertisement.

The artist entering the field of advertising or editorial layout and design will find a rich and varied area of work open to him. It is by no means limited to the comparative few who work for the big magazines, publishing houses and advertising agencies. There are posters, newspaper advertisements of all types and sizes, brochures of every description, house organs, annual reports. These and countless other forms of visual communication are issued by everyone imaginable — from the New York Stock Exchange to the food manufacturers, steel makers, automobile manufacturers, publications, drug companies, communications industries — the list is endless. All of these organizations and thousands more, both large and small, national and local, wholesale and retail, need the artist to plan and design their selling and mailing pieces and many other kinds of printed matter.

Creating new design ideas

To provide fresh new design ideas for the endlessly varied kinds of printed matter that require them, the artist must have an open mind at all times. He must experiment with forms, colors, textures, type, and every other design medium available. Only by experimenting can he escape from the same old patterns and create fresh new concepts of layout and design that will capture the attention of readers. If artists had not been willing to experiment, we would not have had the great and varied forms of art of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, the men of the Renaissance, and today's modern artists and countless artistic directions. The same monotonous kind of art would be repeated year after year and century after century. It was the experimental artists who created the great art of the past and it will be the experimental artists who create the new trends of tomorrow. It is they who will be sought after by advertisers and editors.

Although we stress the value of new ideas and creativity, we do not mean to imply that there are no guideposts for the experimental designer. Your experiments in design should be based on a background of principles that have already proven their worth. In previous lessons we have taught you the principles of composition, and these are just as valid in the layout and design of the whole page as they are for making pictures. In this and the following lessons we show you still more fundamentals by which you can attract attention, hold interest, and create a reaction in the viewer. Take advantage of this knowledge — out of your imaginative application of these principles will come your own highly individual and creative work.

Division of area — our first consideration

Layout is the art of organizing the two essential elements — the copy and the art, whether it be illustrations or stylized designs — and arranging them in a logical and pleasing manner within the boundaries of your area. There are countless ways to divide the space and arrange the pictorial material and the copy.

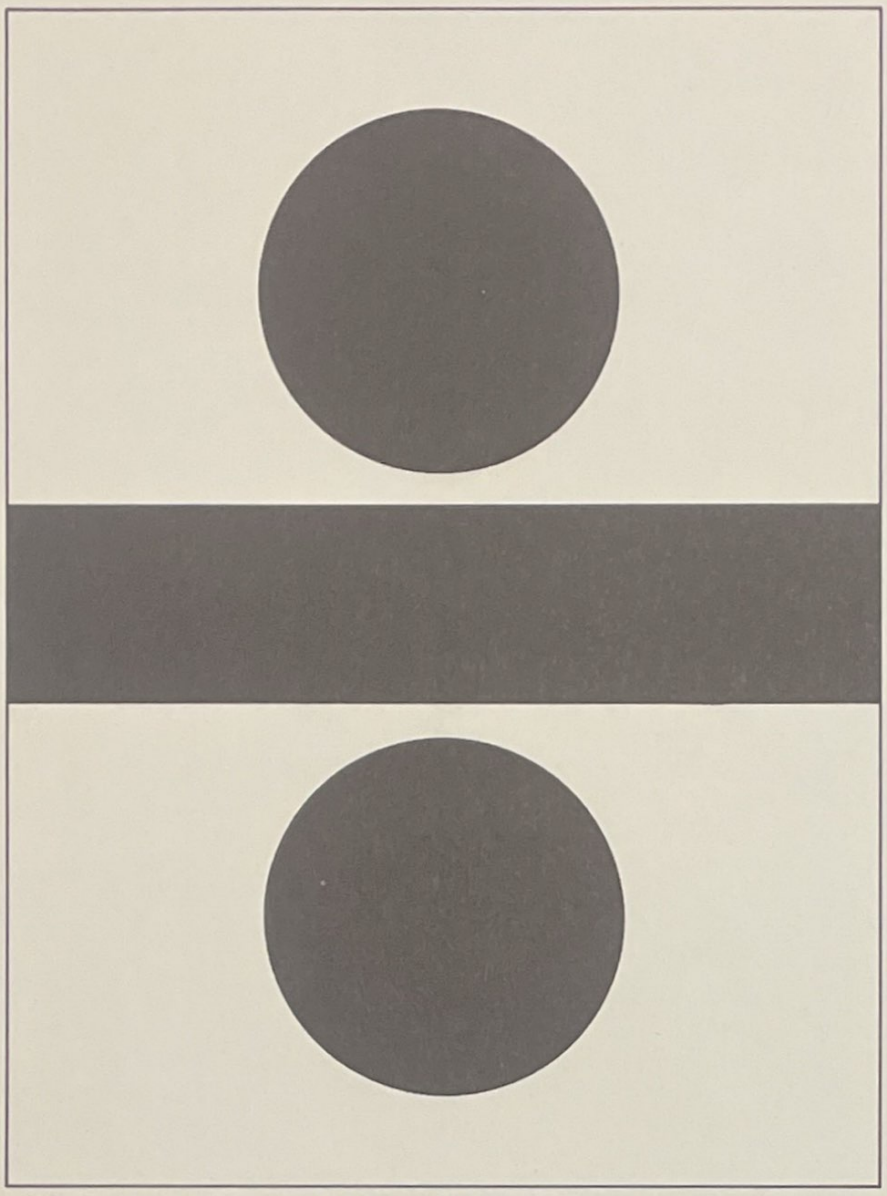
In the basic arrangements on the opposite page, the black and gray areas represent the elements — design or pictures, and copy — and the white space represents the remaining background area. The first six arrangements use geometric shapes (like circles, triangles and rectangles) in symmetrical motifs. Since these six designs are symmetrical, they present no problem of balance: every symmetrical arrangement balances itself. Later we discuss the methods of balancing irregular designs like the last two.

You will also learn in this lesson how to apply these geometric divisions of area to actual layouts. You'll see how pictures or symbols of objects can replace the geometric shapes. The horizontal bar in the first design, for instance, could become a block of text, or a row of buildings. The black dot in the third design could be a tennis ball, an apple, or the wheel of an automobile, or it could represent a complicated illustration.

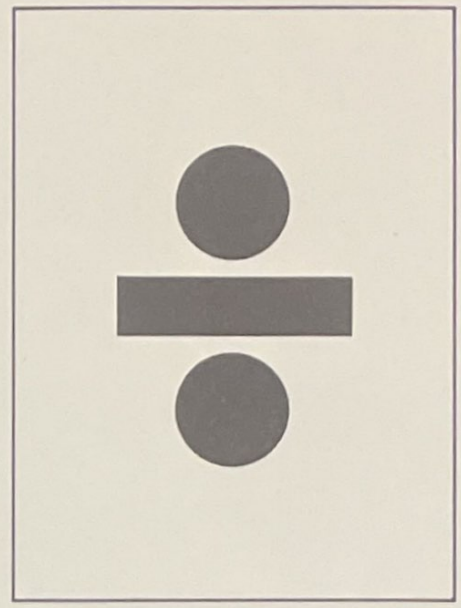
The important thing to remember is that the basis of all good design — no matter what objects or symbols you may use — is the simple, geometric division of your space.

Lesson **18** Famous Artists Course

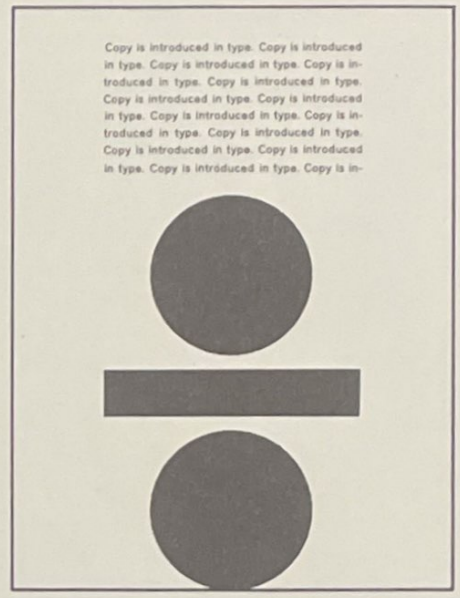
Principles of experimental design



This first motif is massive and powerful because it fills the area.



Smaller and floating in space, it now gives a completely different effect.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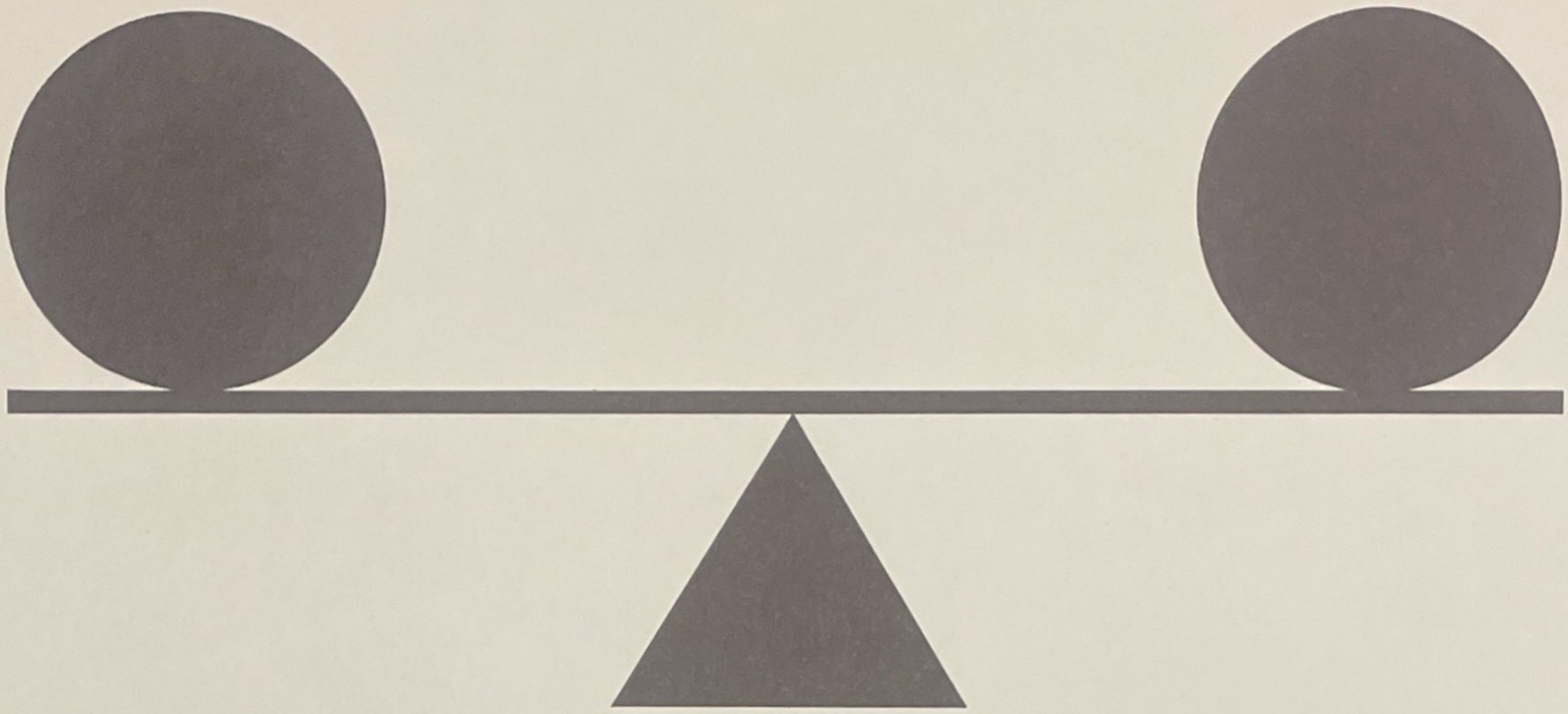
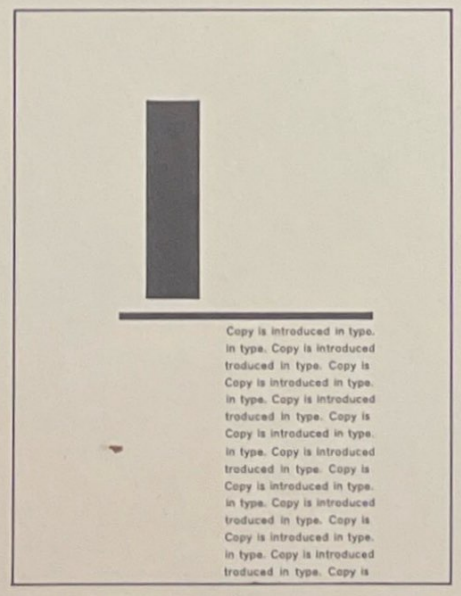


Actual or symmetrical balance

The design above is perfectly balanced. If either one of the balls were moved even a little bit toward the center this symmetrical balance would be destroyed.

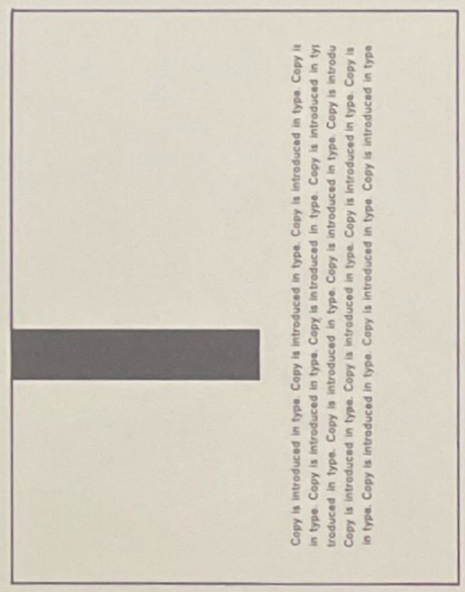
When you do not have perfect symmetry, you can create a feeling of visual balance by anchoring one of the elements to an edge of the area, as shown below.

Visual or asymmetrical balance



Here the block of copy rests on the bottom of the layout area, where it appears to support the rest of the structure.

In this design the heavy black bar "bleeds" at the top of the area. It gives us a visual balance and so provides a feeling of security.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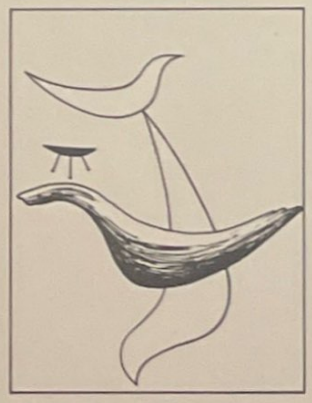
Here the black bar is anchored to the left border to give stability to the vertical block of copy. Note that the symmetry is disturbed by dropping the bar ever so slightly below the center of the page — but the result is a design that is aesthetically satisfying.

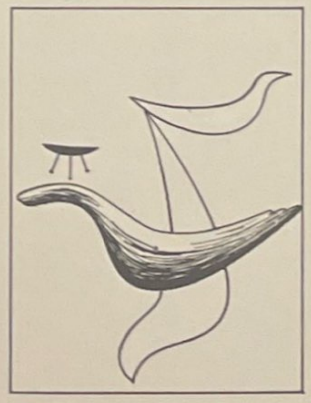
Balance of nongeometric shapes

Courtesy Interiors Magazine

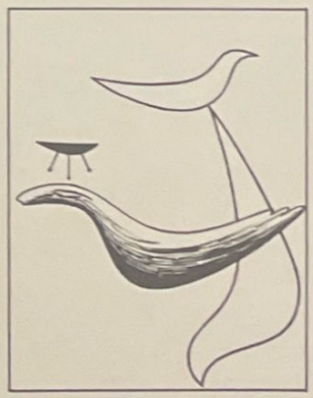
The balance of these four elements is quite satisfactory as the weight is well distributed. Even though the shape at the top is floating, it is so placed as to give a feeling of equilibrium.



Notice how insecure the top shape is here. Because it is extended too far from the vertical point toward the left border, it appears to be slipping off.



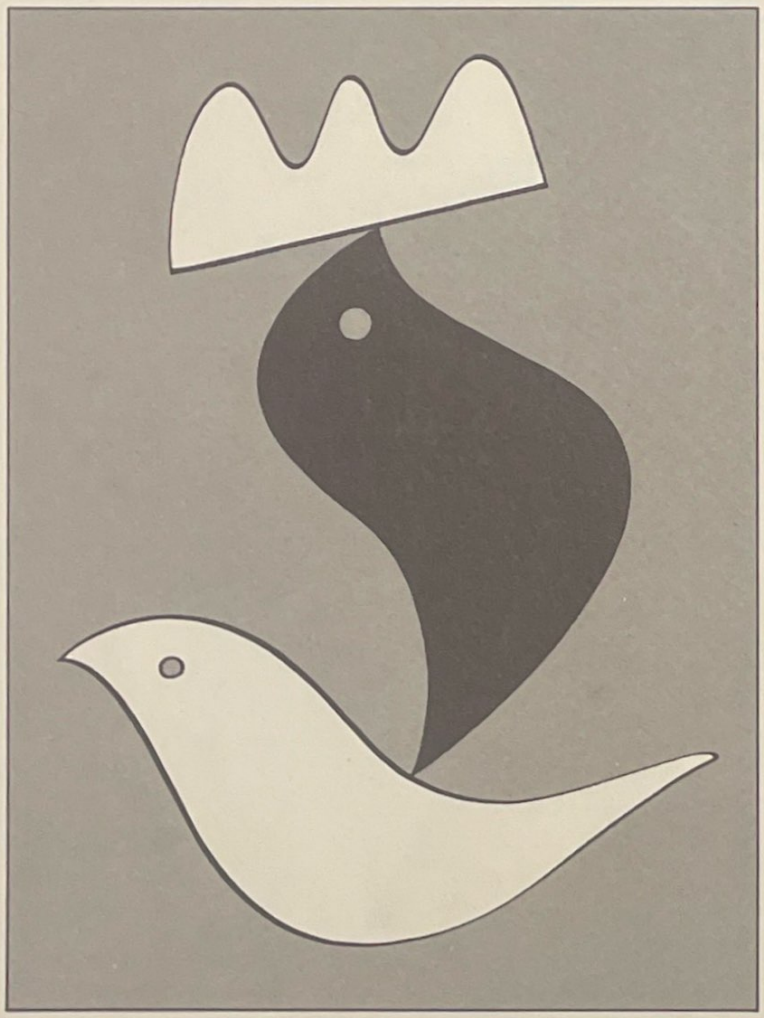
Here is the opposite condition. The top shape is too far to the right and the point of support is too far from the center of balance. It will fall down.



This time the vertical middle shape is misplaced, being too far to the right. The general effect is that the structure is being crowded into the lower right.

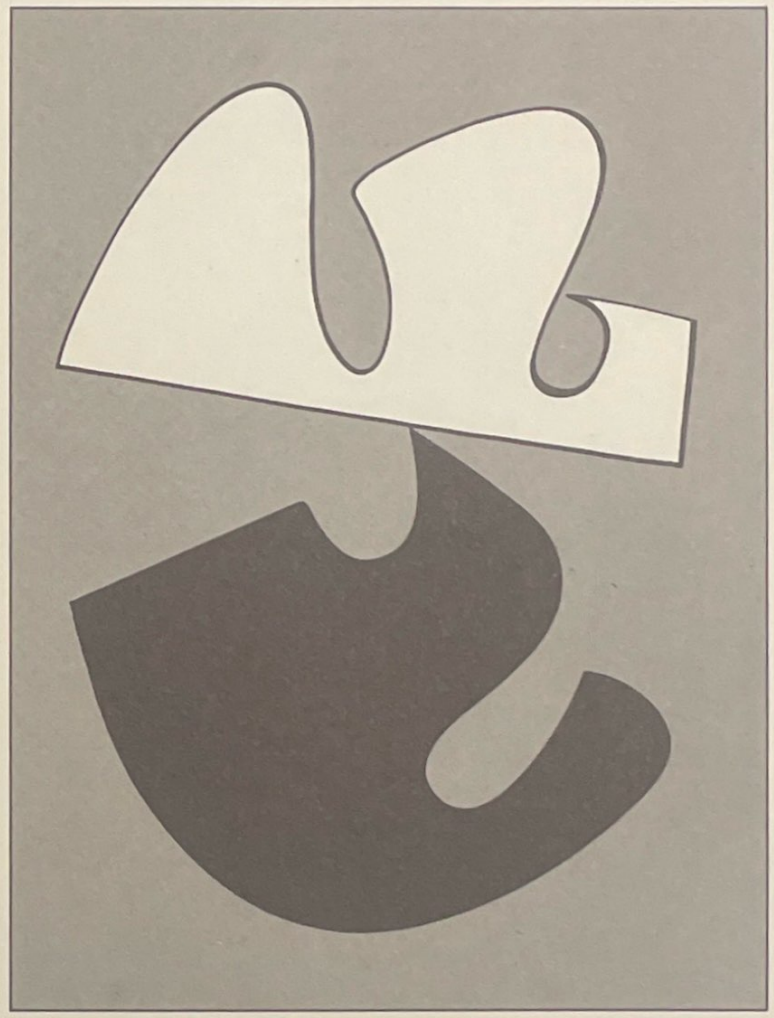
The use of nongeometric shapes

The two examples below are not geometrical. These irregular shapes do not divide the area into equal parts and do not balance themselves automatically – as do symmetrical arrangements of geometric forms. The problem is to place these shapes in a way that creates the illusion of balance. We must feel here like a juggler balancing something on his head – a fraction of an inch to the right or left and everything may collapse.



Balancing three elements

Trace these forms and cut them out of black and white (or colored) paper. Then move them around within a rectangle of contrasting tone, trying various arrangements until you feel how the shapes are performing in respect to each other and to the background. When the forms are approximately the same size or weight, they will balance when touching each other at a point near the middle of their width.

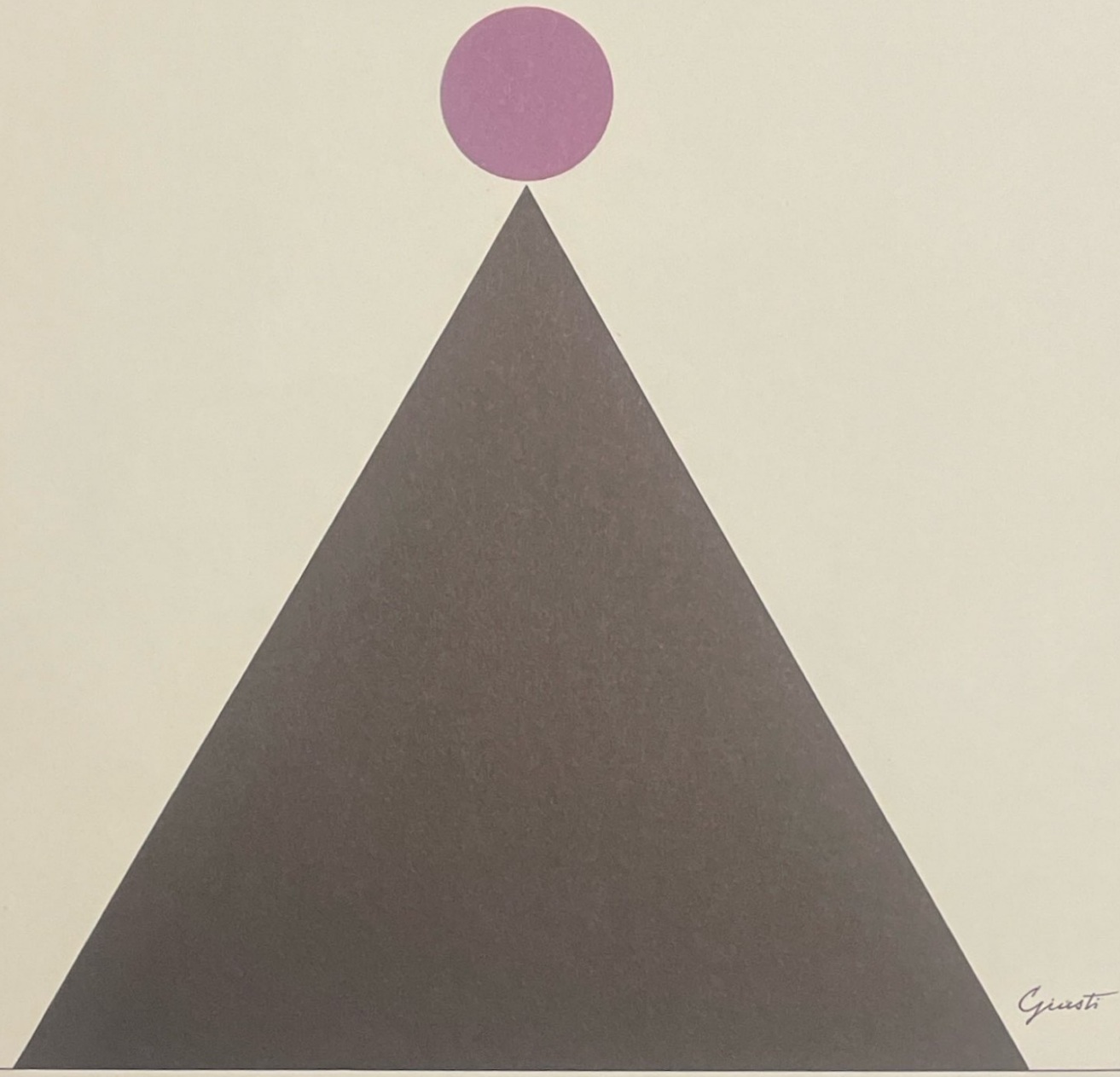


Balancing two elements

Here again are elements of two different values. One is white and therefore light; the other is black and seems heavy. It is logical to place the heavy black one at the bottom, as a supporting base. Again you will find that for balance the best touching point is about in the middle. Cut out other shapes and try arranging them against backgrounds of various sizes and proportions.

From Art Director at Work; published by Hastings House, copyright 1959

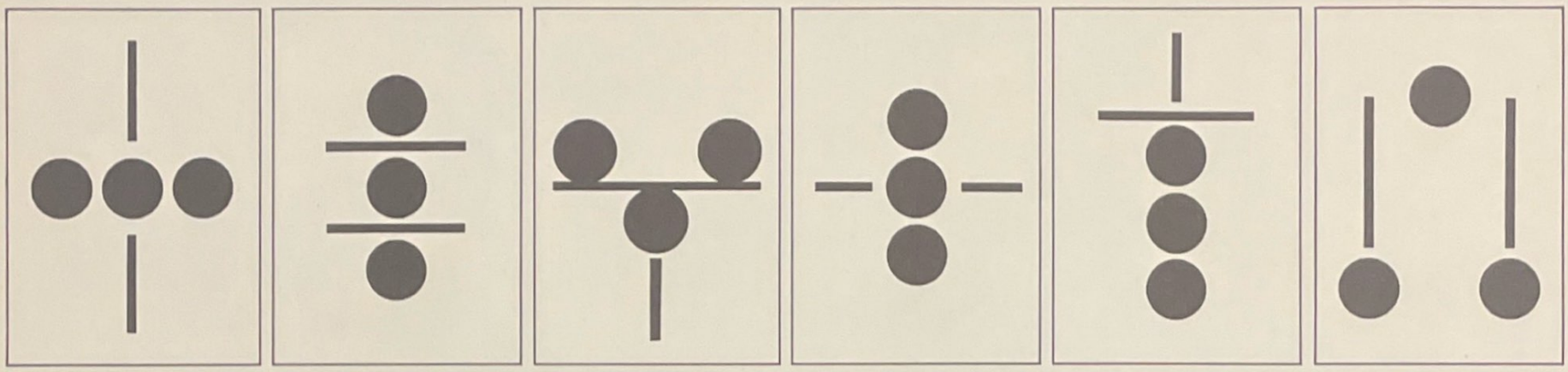
THE ART DIRECTOR AT WORK



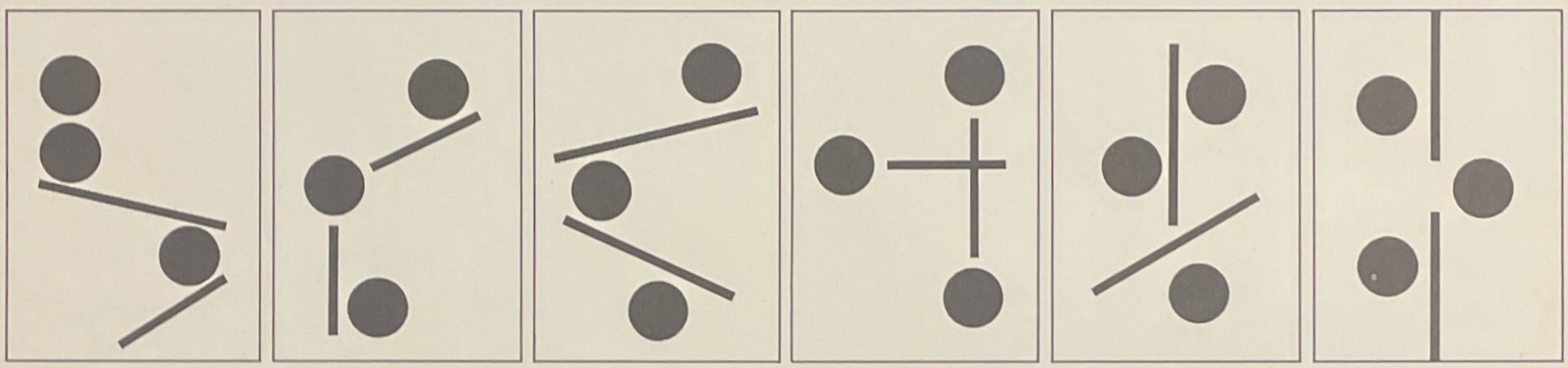
Simplicity

This composition for a title page is based on a simple, geometric design. A monumental feeling is obtained by the simplicity of its forms and execution. Notice too that there is a certain classical flavor — the design suggests a pyramid with the sun above it. The generous use of white space greatly strengthens the design.

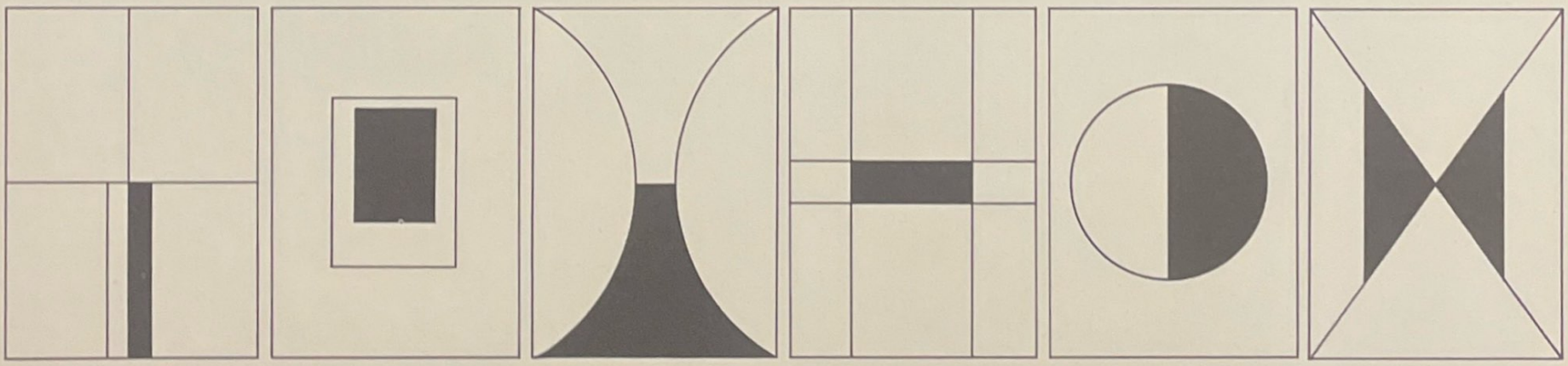
Variations on a theme



Symmetrical effects: Here we use nothing but three black balls and two bars. But see the variety of designs we can make with them! These, of course, are only a few — the possibilities of combination are infinite. Because all these designs are symmetrical the feeling of balance is achieved automatically.

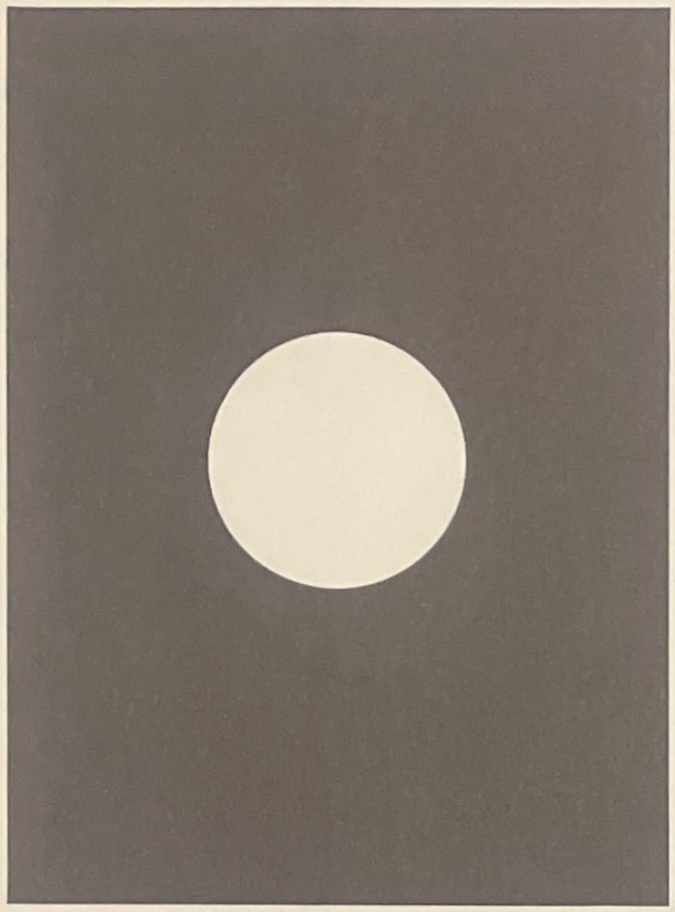


Asymmetrical effects: The same black balls and bars now produce asymmetrical effects. They are still the same geometric elements, but as they are not arranged symmetrically, the feeling of visual balance must be produced by sensitive placement of the elements within the group and in their relationship to the space around them.



Geometric effects: Many interesting designs come from combinations of these simple forms — circles, squares, triangles, rectangles. Although the shapes themselves are simple geometric ones, it is possible to project striking and powerful effects by arranging them with imagination.

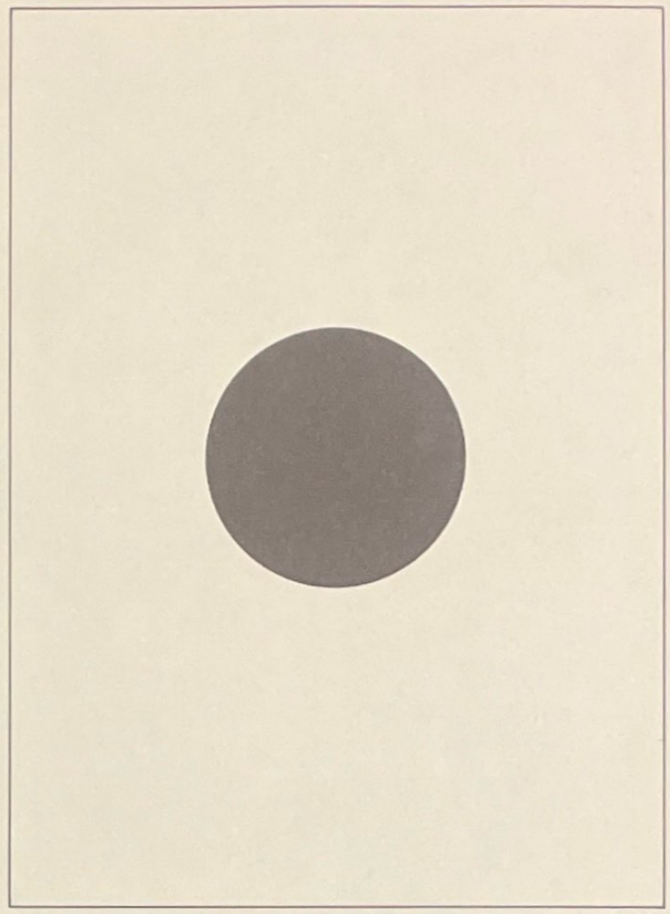
The effect of dark and light backgrounds



A dark background with a light design is often used for book jackets. The reason for this is a practical one — a book is handled a great deal and a white jacket will soil too easily. To stand out against a dark background like this, all the design elements must be light.

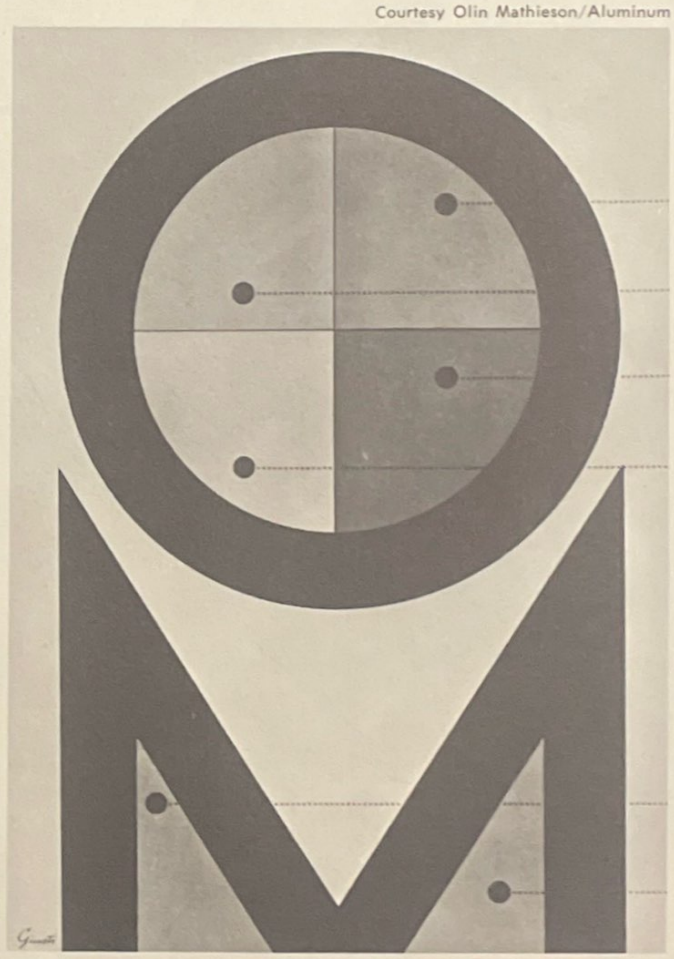
Courtesy Graphis Press

The medium tone of this background affords good contrast to the white areas and also shows up the black printing in the design and copy. Basically this is a pattern of light and dark against halftone.



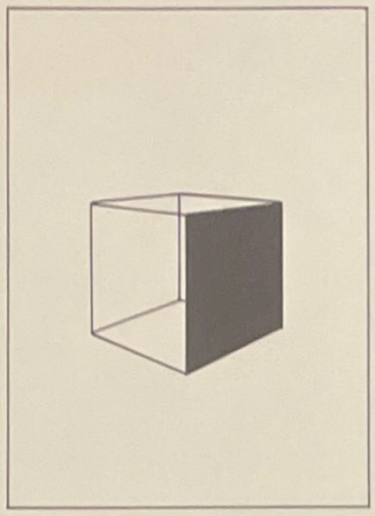
You get a lighter feeling from a background that is either pure white or light in tone. In either case the lettering can be imprinted in color or in black. Notice that this circular dark shape floating on the white background gives the illusion of being smaller than the white circle in the design on the left — actually, the two are exactly the same size.

Courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum

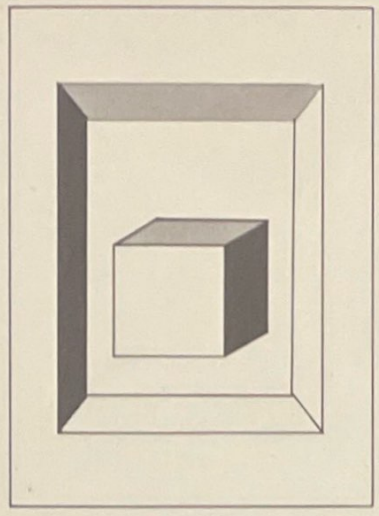


Although this is a pattern of dark elements on a light background, its over-all effect is quite different from the one above, because of the weight and thickness of the powerful black lines. It also has the structural advantage of the large M resting solidly on the base of the area.

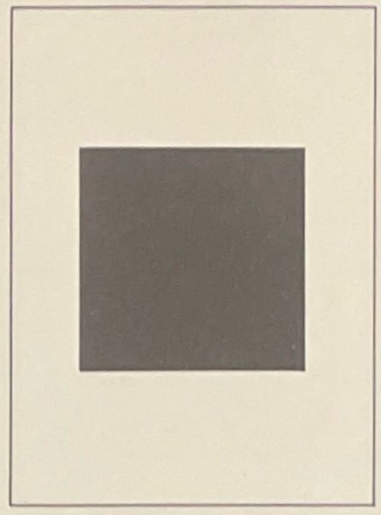
Two- and three-dimensional effects



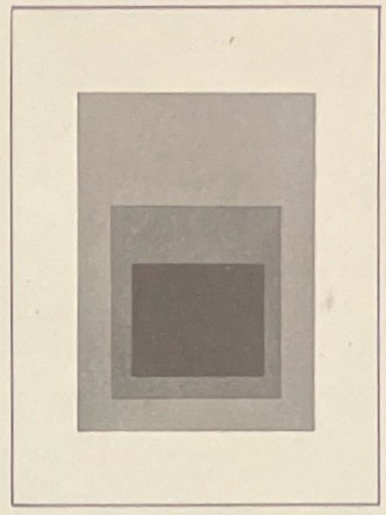
Here you see the cube in true perspective.



This cube within the frame is not rendered in true perspective, but by design and tone it creates its feeling of three dimensions. The gray and black tones on the frame and cube also add depth.



A two-dimensional rendering. Whether the square is in color or in black, the effect will be flat. This is because the form stands alone and is not related to other shapes of different values.

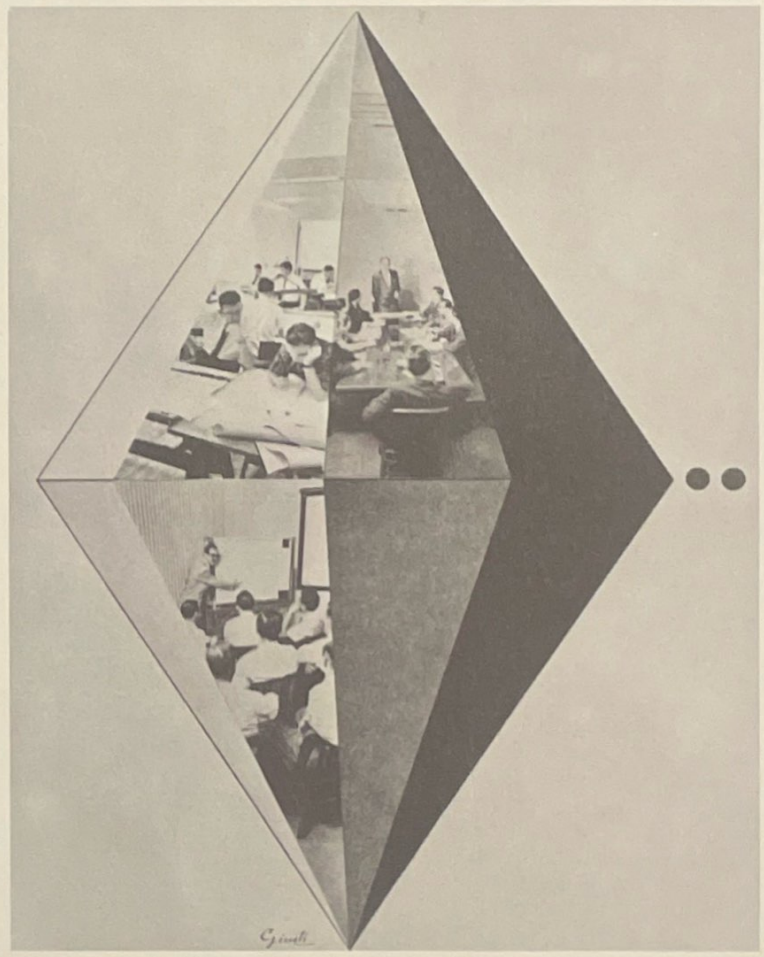


By the subtle use of different values you can obtain three-dimensional effects even when using only flat tones. Although the shades in this composition are all flat, the black seems gradually to recede.

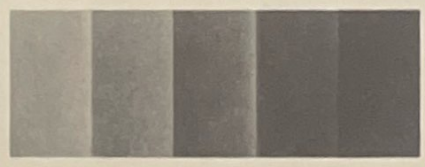
Courtesy Graphis Press

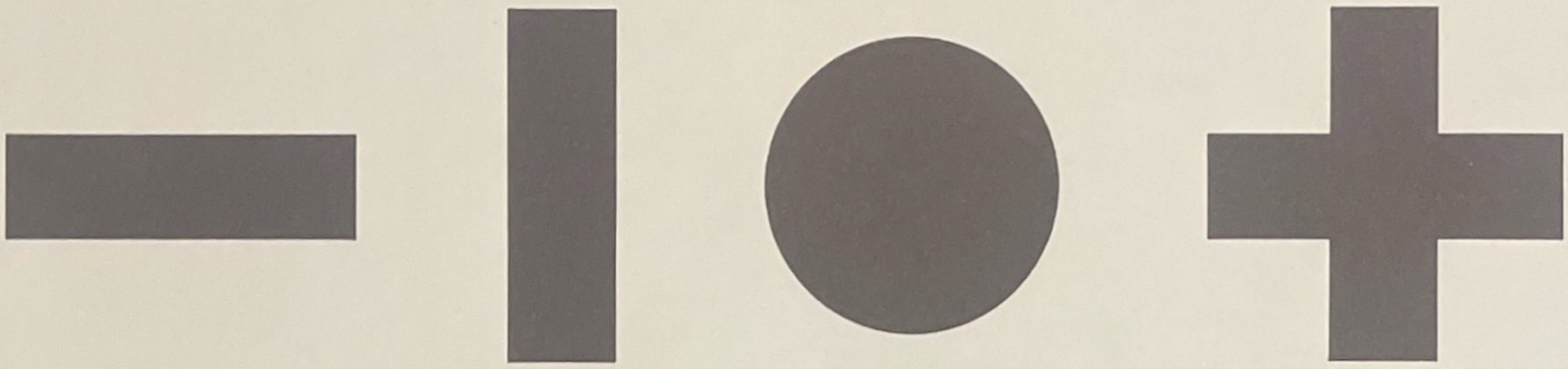
Two dimensions. No attempt was made here to create a third dimension — in fact, it was avoided. The idea was to emphasize strong design and spontaneous technique. To increase the casual feeling, the play of light and shadow was purposely ignored. The shapes were carefully placed so they would not be symmetrical or suggest mechanical precision, but rather be free and playful. This was all done because a cover for *Graphis* magazine should not identify with anything mechanical — it should reflect the artistic character of the publication.

Courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum



Unlike the *Graphis* cover, a rigid geometric motif was used here to emphasize the feeling of precision and technical achievement. The third-dimension effect is obtained entirely by using flat tones. The light is directed from left to right. The graduated nuances of tone — from very light gray to deep black — follow this direction and create the three-dimensional feeling.



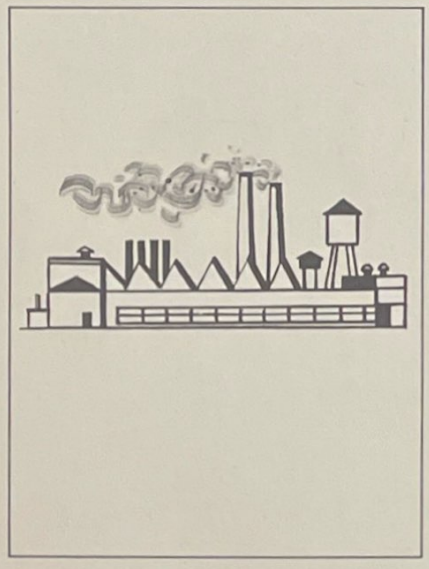


Horizontal Vertical Centered Combination

Basic layout designs

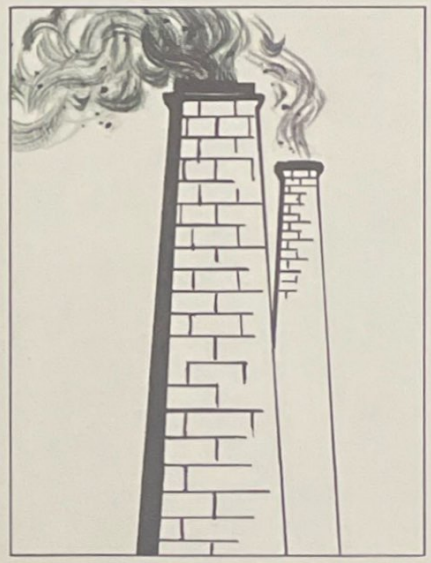
When do you decide whether a layout or design should be horizontal, or vertical, or centered, or a combination? The answer is: before you start to draw. It is when you – in the thinking process that precedes any physical action – consider the problem that faces you. To what shape or symbol is your subject related? How can you use it in your layout? Does your subject lend itself to a horizontal or a vertical page – for example, do you have a long row of factory buildings and forms? Or is it a vertical shape – like the simple smokestacks on the factory buildings? Each subject demands a different creative solution. It would be illogical, for example, to draw a long row of factory buildings and smoking stacks in a vertical space. If the character of the stacks is the important symbol, then you might create a vertical design with the stacks alone.

The shape of the space determines the direction you will go in establishing a design – and limits the liberties you can take. However, in any given area it is possible to handle many subjects well in horizontal or vertical designs.

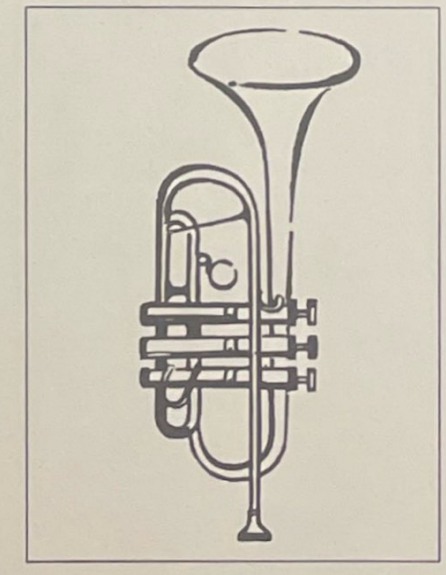


Let's assume you want a powerful symbol of industry, and you have a vertical area in which to work. If you use a horizontal arrangement of factory buildings, everything becomes small and innocuous and all you have is a row of factory forms as in the horizontal design on the left. It has no impact.

On the right we simply take two smokestacks and make them a powerful, vertical symbol that says the same thing in the same area but with much more strength.



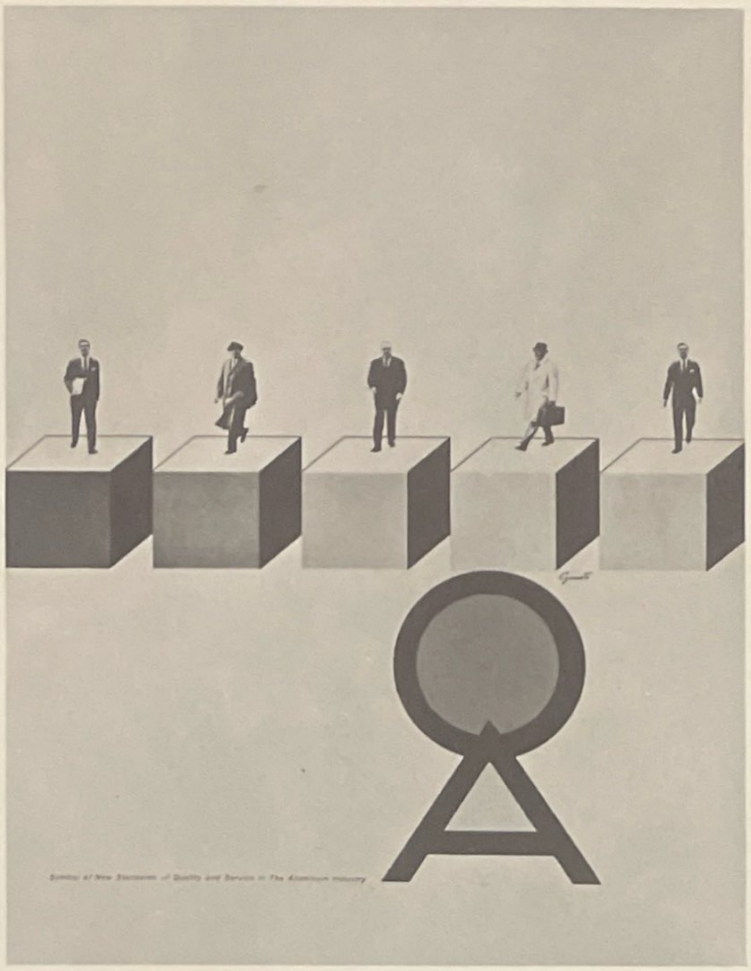
You can handle some subjects with either horizontal or vertical designs. The trumpets pictured here are an example. They can be arranged horizontally or vertically and will be effective either way. However, if you have a tall narrow space in which to work, then the vertical arrangement at right would be far more logical than the horizontal one at left.



Applying the basic designs

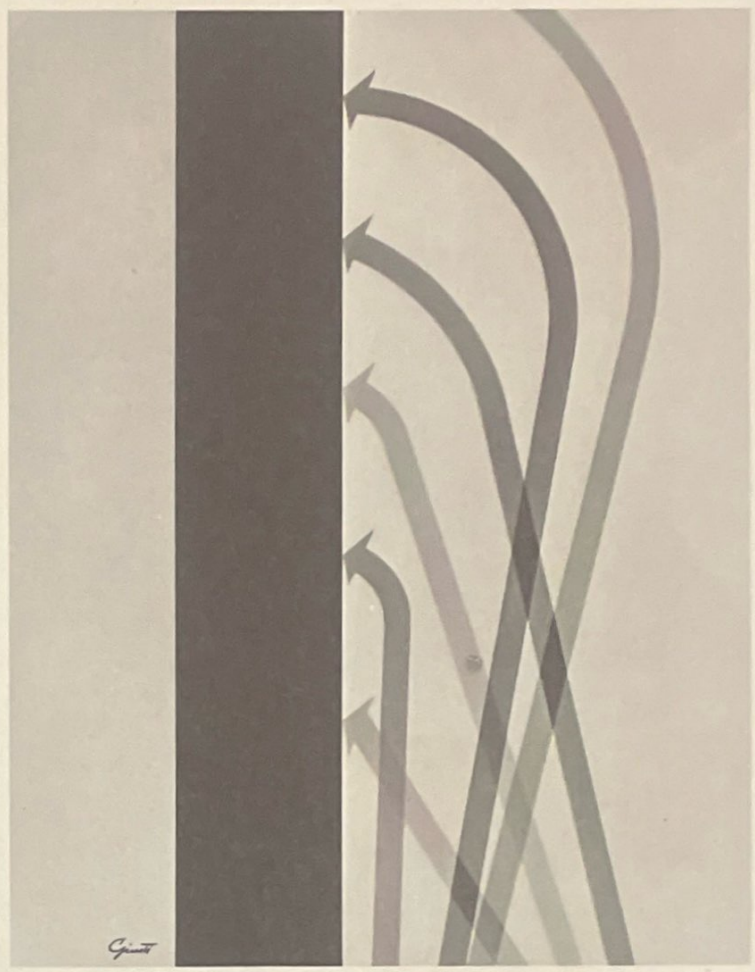
These four layouts — horizontal, vertical, centered, and combination — demonstrate how our basic designs can be applied to actual advertisements.

Courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum



Horizontal: You might think of these as a succession of units that work as a team to make up a whole company. These are the "building blocks" of the organization. This is shown in a horizontal strip as a symbol of the cooperation of the individual sections and personnel of a company.

Courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum

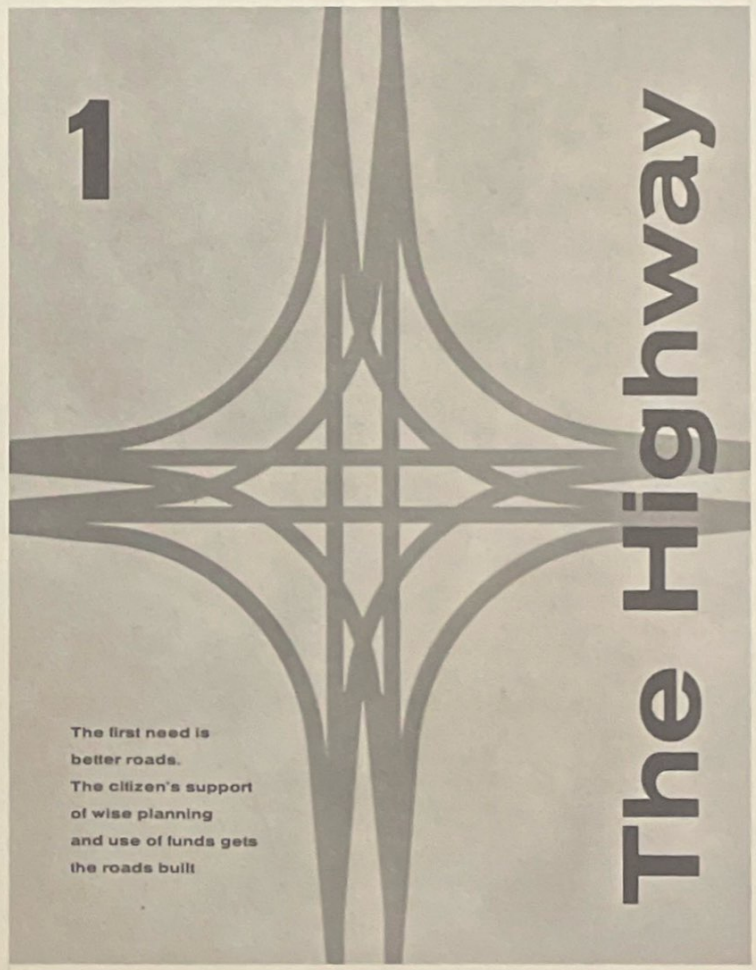


Vertical: This is a symbol of a big corporation reaching for an ever-growing market. The arrows are evidence of the company's effort to reach continually upward toward higher achievement and even higher goals. "Up" is the key word of this symbol.

Courtesy Rand, McNally & Co.

Centered: This globe, with its figure, is logically centered between left and right borders. Beneath the globe, the larger copy block and smaller trademark are visually balanced between the sides of the layout space.

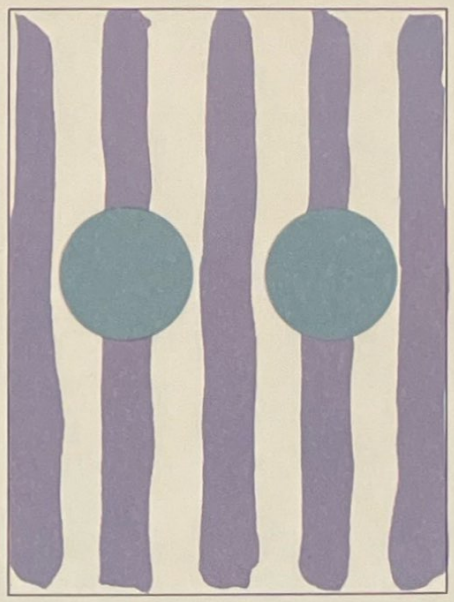
Courtesy Ford Motor Co.

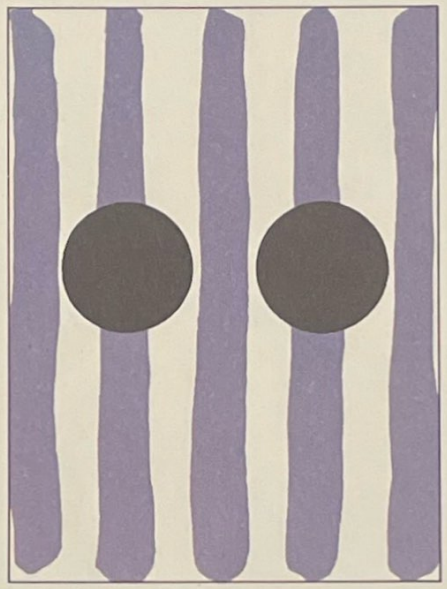


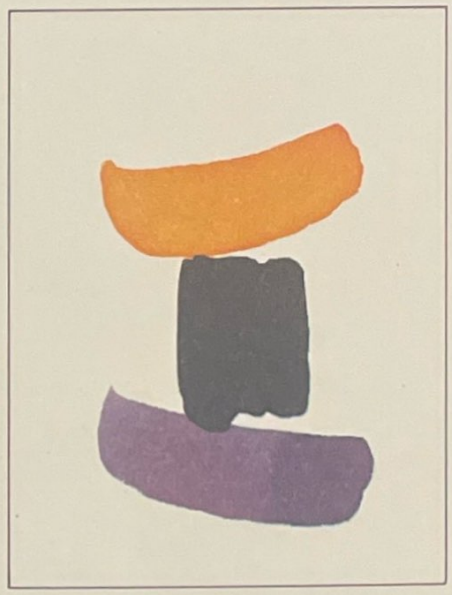
Combination: This symbol of our superhighways lends itself perfectly to this form of layout — the complex crisscrossing of highways provides a natural cross design combining horizontal with vertical arrangement.

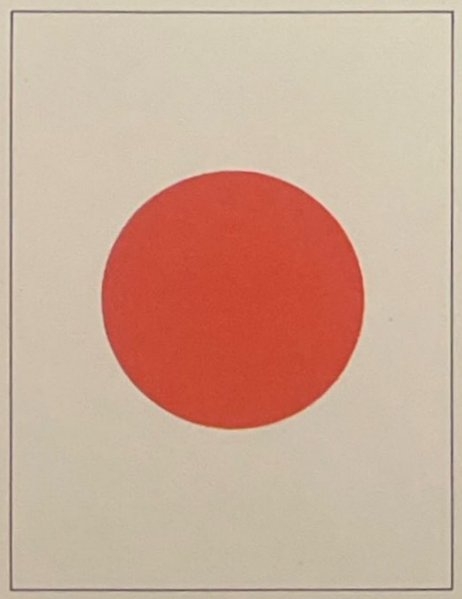
Lesson **18** Famous Artists Course

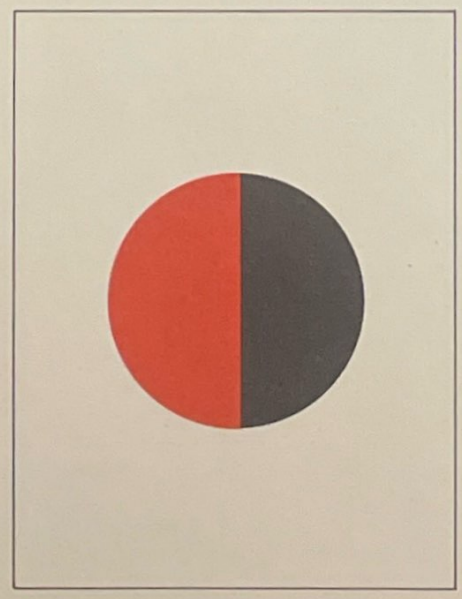
Principles of experimental design







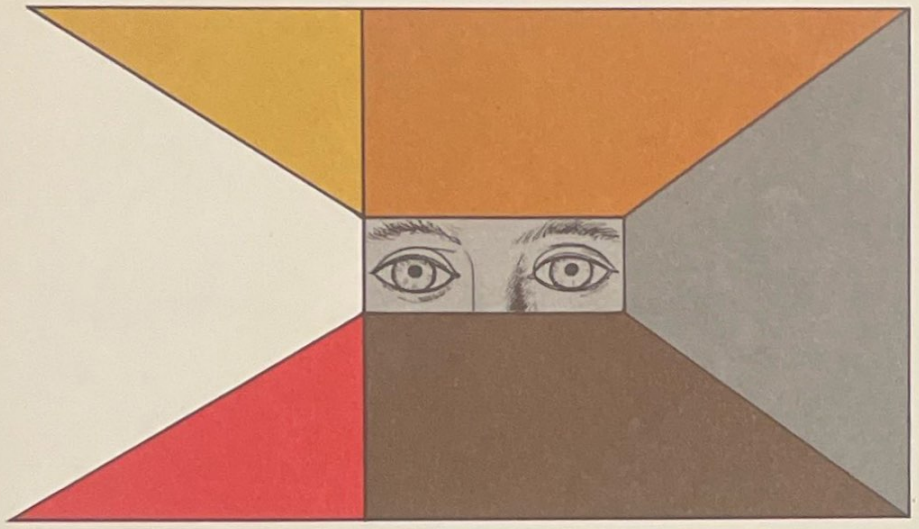




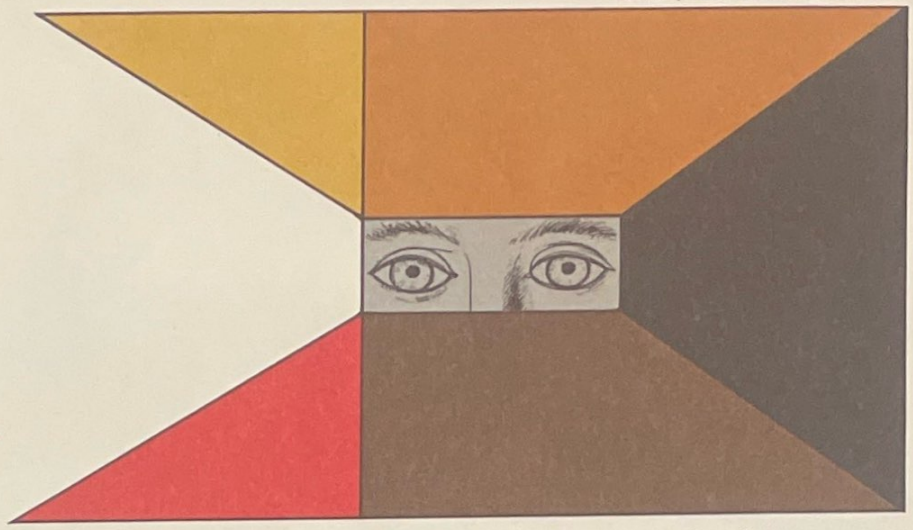
The importance of black

In design and layout, black is the center of the color symphony. All the colors can be related to it. Compare these twin sets of color layouts. Black has been added to the second one of each pair – see how it strengthens them. The presence of the black makes the over-all design much more brilliant, and gives the whole arrangement far greater impact.

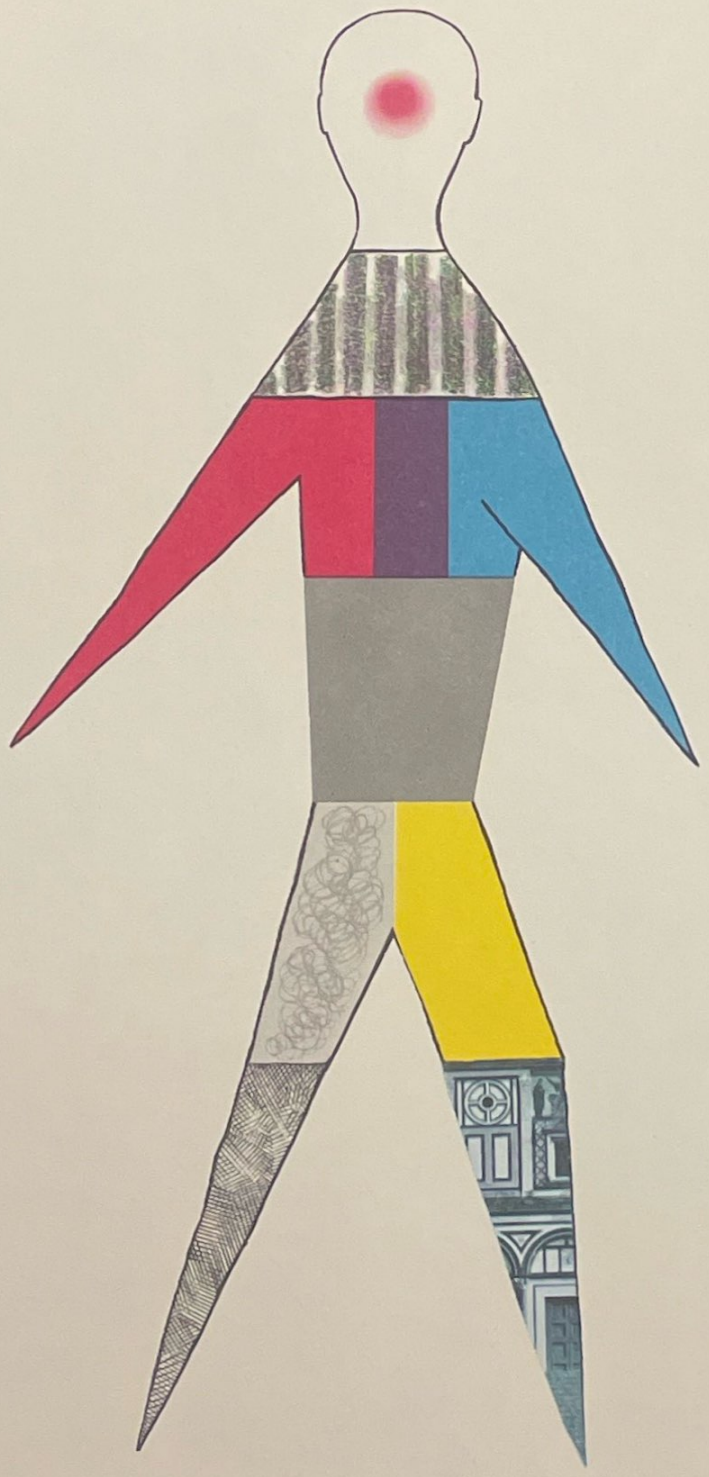
Courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum



This design has no large area of black. Therefore the colors seem to lack brilliance and we get a weak rendition of an otherwise bold and powerful design.



In this variation, the black area added at the right strengthens the design and makes the colors appear much more luminous.



No black was used here. Consequently both design and brilliance of color are weakened, and there is a competitive monotony of colors and tones.

Courtesy O. S. Tyson Co.

See how much more strength this figure now has with the small area of black added to its center. This provides a strong focal center to which we can relate all the other colors and textures.

The power of simplification

This is an anchor in its simplest form. It is the result of drastic elimination of details from designs like those below. This process of simplification leaves us the bare skeleton of an anchor — it keeps only the characteristic structure of the strong upper cross-form and the half circle at the bottom. Freed of details, its simplicity is strong and effective in communicating its message. A simple silhouette like this can be reduced to a quarter-inch in size and still be clear and impressive.

Compare the clarity and impact of this simple design with the more complicated anchor designs shown below.

Here is an elaborate design of the anchor crossed by a torch and the symbol of medicine — two serpents on a staff — all intertwined with laurel leaves. The anchor is almost lost here.

The crossed anchors, shield, and spread eagle in the cap insignia of commissioned officers of the United States Navy creates an elaborate but somewhat less complicated design than the one at left.

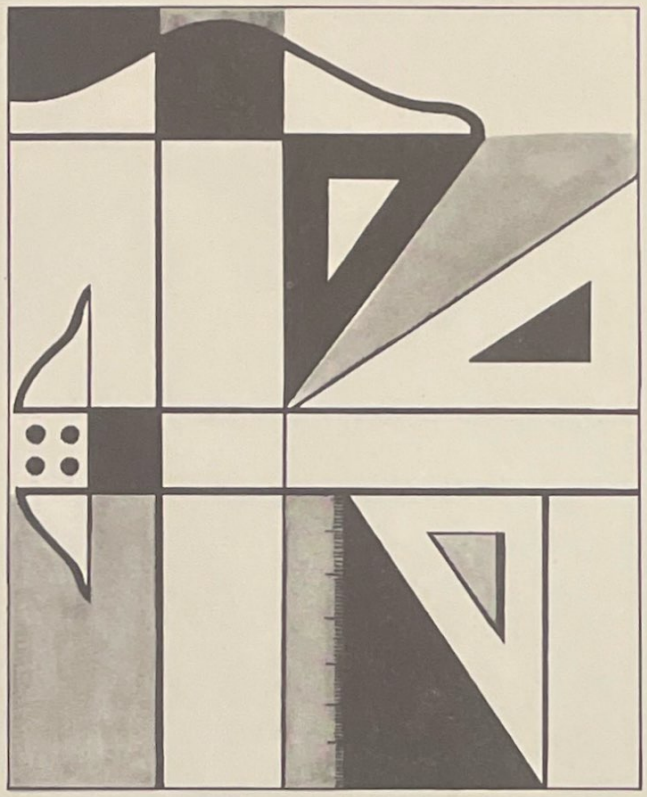
In this simpler arrangement the two crossed anchors and chain are quite realistic. But even though they are not confused by extraneous items, the design is still complicated and involved.

This fifteenth-century trademark is a simple engraving on copper. Except for the fish twined around its stem, doesn't it have a remarkably modern feeling?

Simplifying and subtracting

There is no substitute for clean, simple, stripped-to-the-bone design when you want to communicate an idea. You can often accomplish this by removing every element which is not essential to the design. Any cluttering of the layout makes it harder for the viewer to feel the visual impact and get the message.

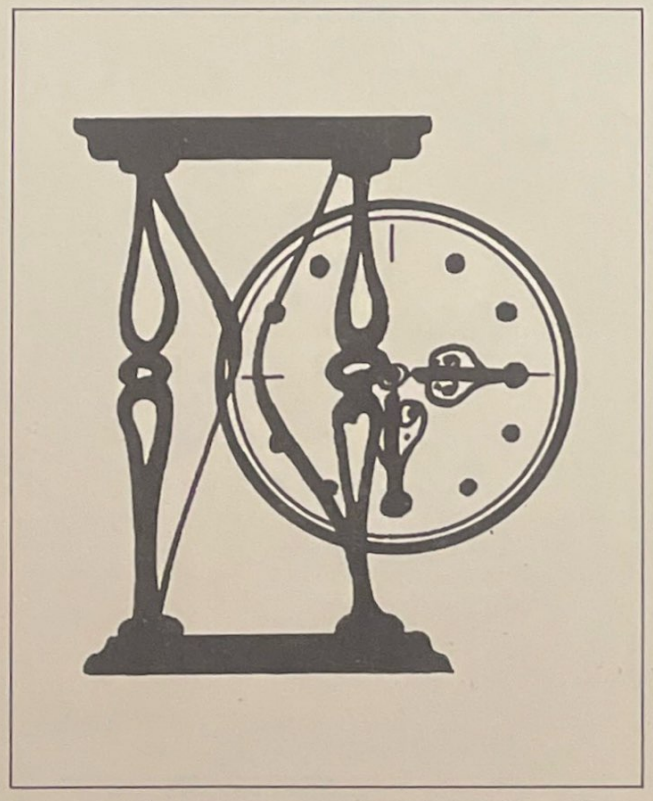
A symbol — the clearest way to present an idea — should never be littered with a confusing mass of detail. It should be interpreted with originality, but still retain every identifying characteristic that makes its message clear. Note how much more effective the two designs become after simplification.



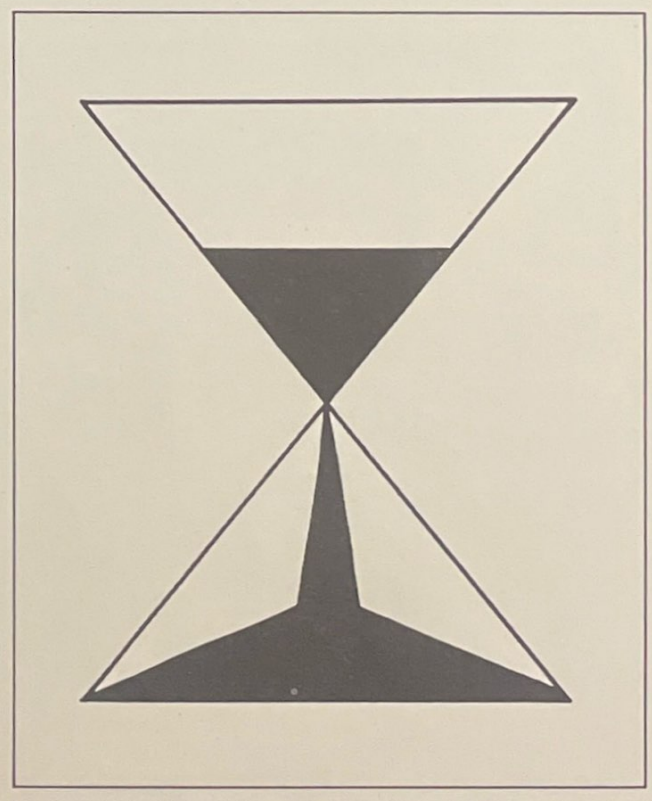
The main elements of this cover design — the T-squares and triangles — can be recognized, but you have to hunt for them. Too many nonessential elements cause a disorder that destroys the design's impact.

Courtesy Graphis Press

See how the same main elements — the drawing implements — stand out forcefully in this arrangement. A humorous note is also added by introducing the two eyes. This gives the design far greater strength.



This is a confusing attempt to create a symbol of time by overlapping the realistic hourglass and the clock.



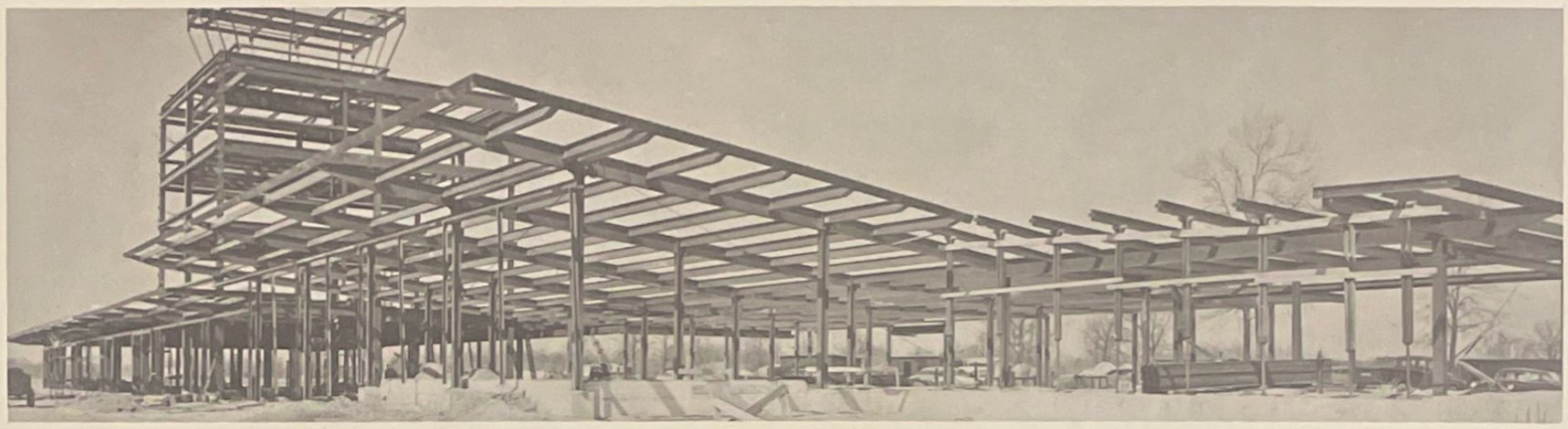
See how much more quickly and clearly the simplified version of the hourglass alone communicates the same idea of time.

Lesson **18** Famous Artists Course

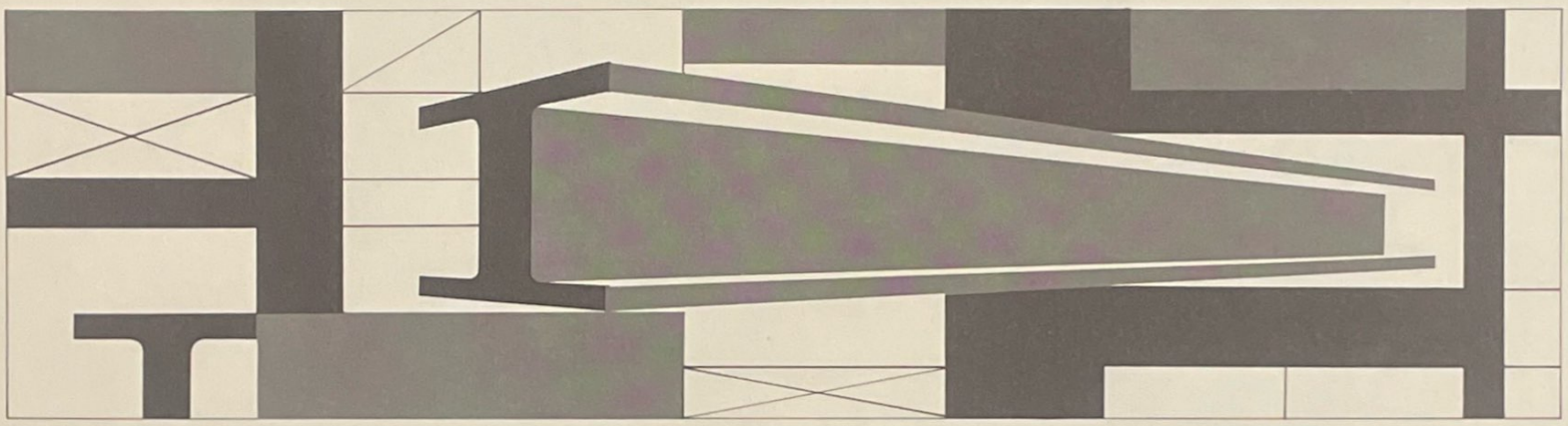
Principles of experimental design

Avoiding all detours

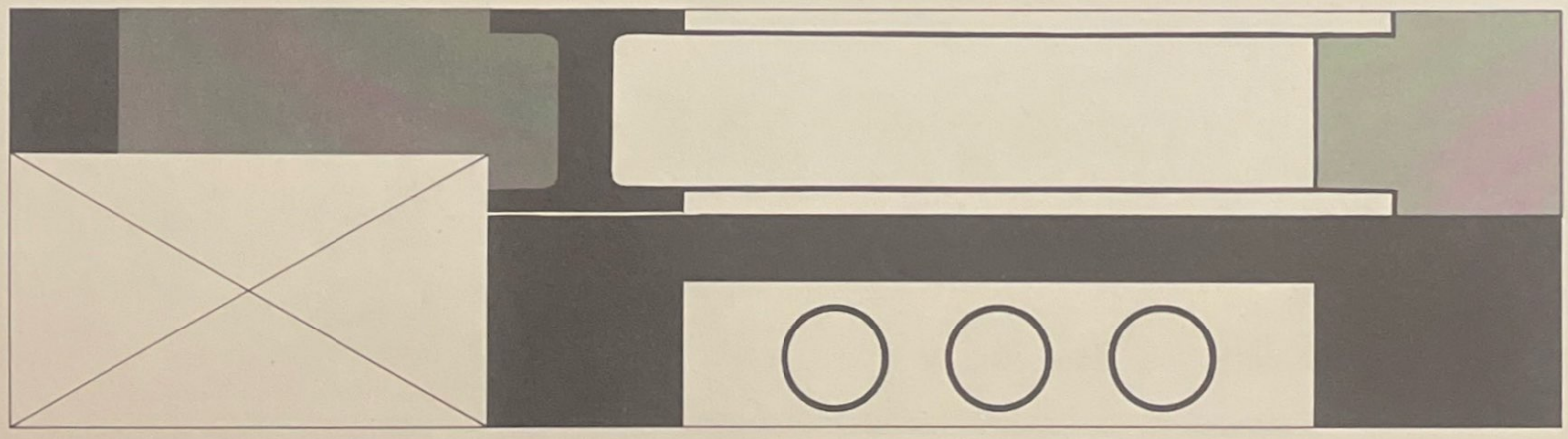
Courtesy Aviation Div'n., Toledo, O.



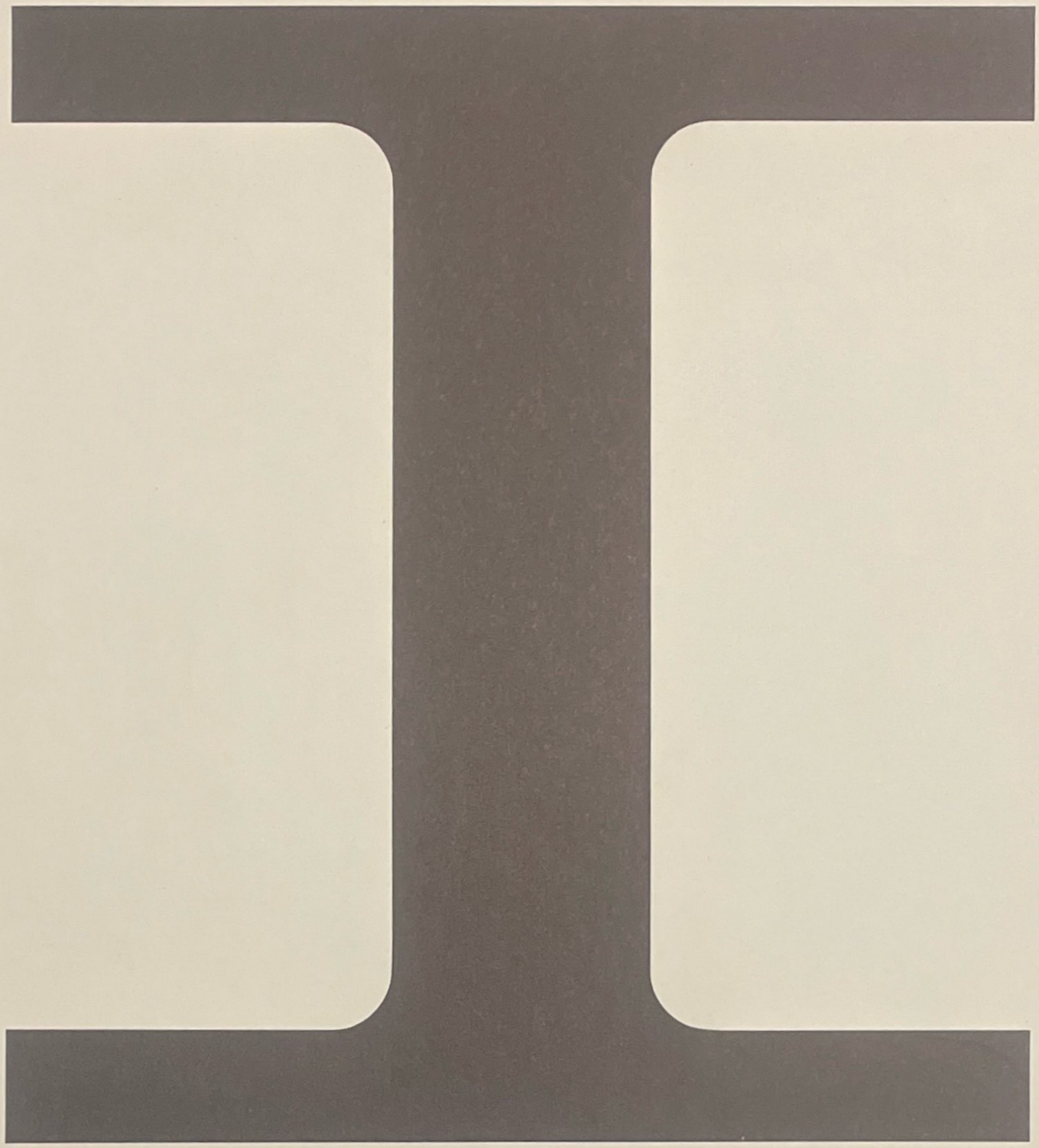
1 This photograph shows the complex metal framework of a building under construction. We want to simplify — to eliminate all nonessential details — in order to make a contemporary design based on the theme of steel construction. Obviously the I-beam girders, steel frame and cage-like design are important motifs.



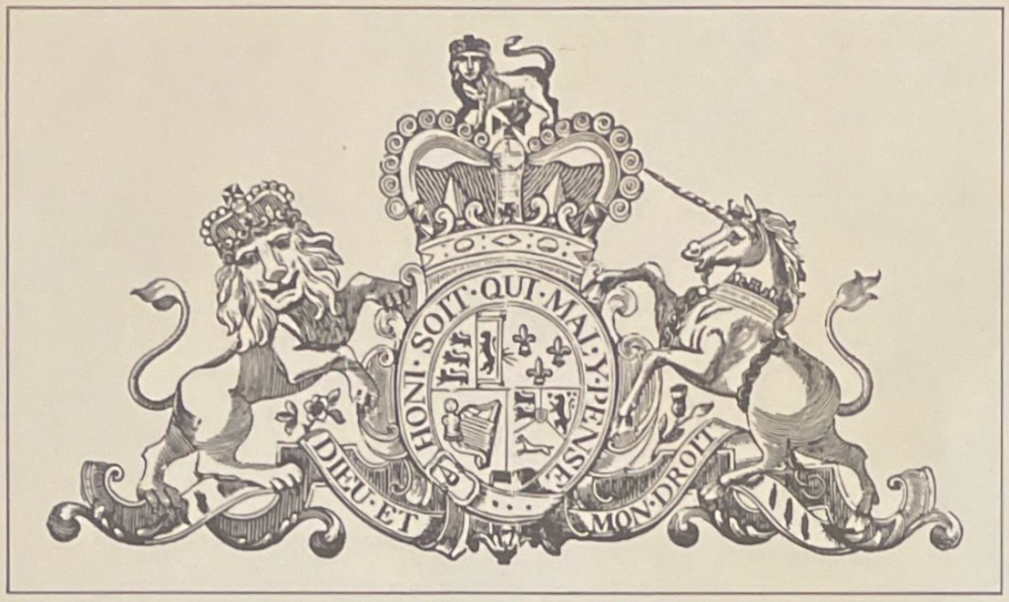
2 This simple geometric pattern retains the essentials and gives us the impression of a modern, efficient construction job. The black is the skeleton of the design and the gray tone adds interest to the division of area. The clean-cut edges suggest the materials involved — iron, steel, wires. A feeling of balance is created by the different weights of the beams. It is clearly a construction in steel. But even greater simplification is possible. Note that the shape of the I-beam is now becoming more prominent in the design.



3 In this version the design is simplified even further. Just the essentials are left. Only two areas of gray remain. The simpler design is much bolder and the I-beam is obviously developing into its main symbol.



4 **Shock impact:** Here is the I-beam—the dominant symbol of the construction job. It communicates the feeling of steel and structure, and it is the ultimate in simplification. This is clear and commanding — it has powerful impact.



1 The creative process starts with this old engraving of the official British coat of arms. It is immediately clear that this complicated design is not suited to a magazine cover — either in terms of shape or technique.

2 A first experiment imitates the engraving style of a portion of the large lion on the left of the coat of arms — but it doesn't fit the page proportions.

3 The next step is to move in to use the head alone and start to posterize the lion's literal portrait. But this version is too small for the space, too busy, and too detailed.

4 Here the crown becomes more important and lends itself to stylized design — but this is not consistent with the still-too-literal lion's head.

5 This crown is bigger and much more exciting. The simpler version of the head is better, but as crown and head are equal in area, they now seem to fight for dominance.

6 In this final form, the crown takes over almost entirely — very strongly and effectively. The lion is still there but his head is now simplified and secondary in importance — we have kept only the essentials. See how much more effective this design is than the one directly above.

Simplifying a motif, step by step

This assignment for a *Holiday* magazine cover was to create a design that symbolized England. A logical thing to start with was the British coat of arms, complete with the lion and his crown. It was quickly obvious that the coat of arms itself was not really essential — the lion was the important symbol. But the lion's head had many superfluous details. Bit by bit they were eliminated. This progressive simplification produced a symbol of poster-like quality that stated its message with great clarity and impact.

You must always be careful to retain any details that are essential to the basic character of the design. Realizing how much the British people respect royalty and the Church of England, it would have been wrong to eliminate or minimize these powerful symbols — the British crown and the cross on top.

7 Do you see how the generous use of black emphasizes the brilliance of the other colors here? This is now a powerful design — and as a cover it had great newsstand impact — its main function.

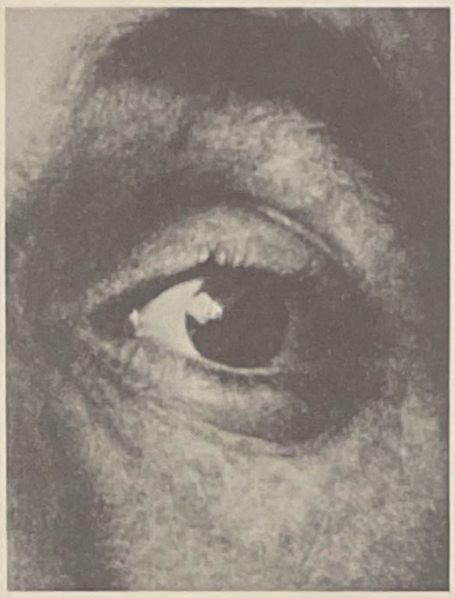
Holiday, © 1958 by the Curtis Publishing Co.

HOLIDAY

APRIL 1958 • 50c

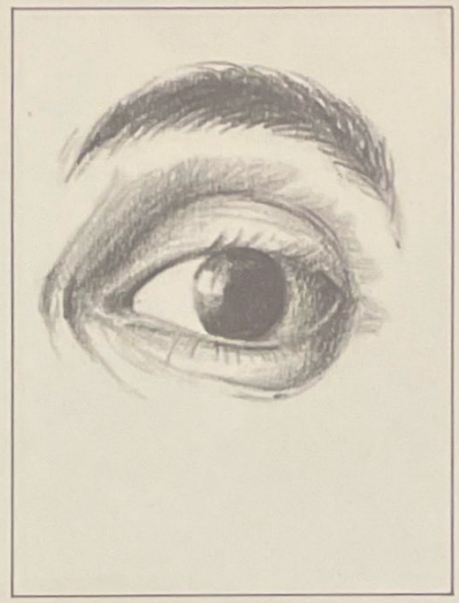
ENGLAND

One subject — many techniques: Each of the eyes below was done in a different technique to demonstrate how a medium or a style of working can contribute a particular character and interest to a design.



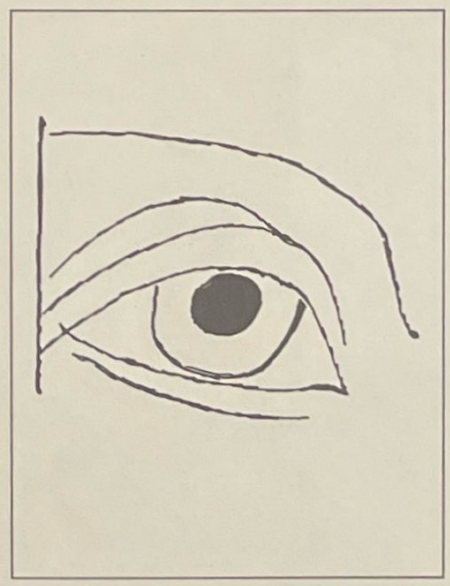
Photograph

Coarse engraving



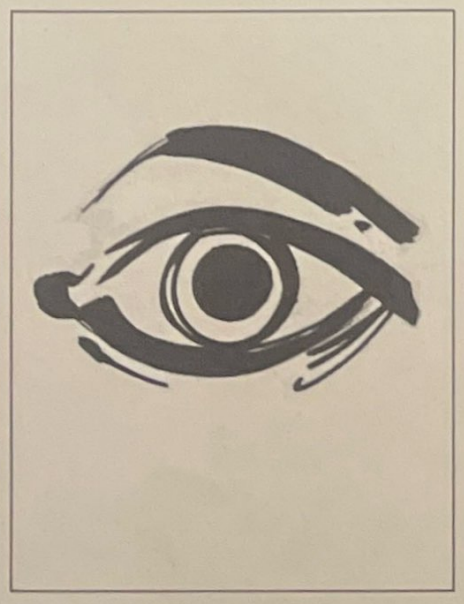
Pencil

Wolff pencil

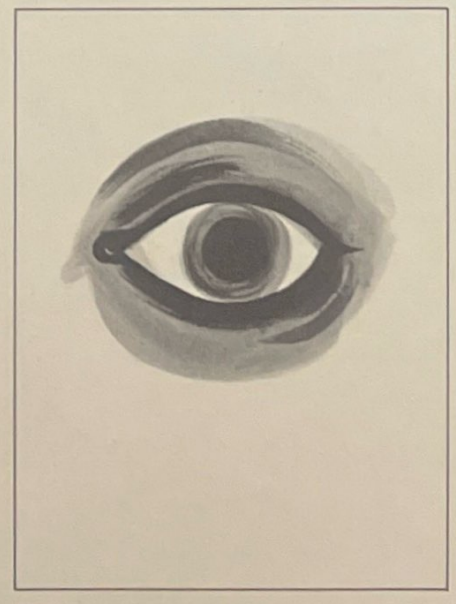


Pen and ink

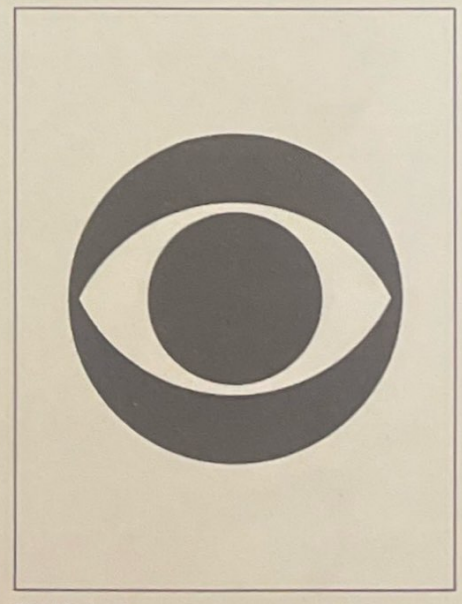
Lithograph crayon



Brush and ink



Wash



Flat black ink

Your choice of techniques

Every style and medium that serve the illustrator can be used just as effectively by the designer. You can handle most subjects equally well in many different ways. But as the technique can do a lot to express the fundamental meaning of the design, the method you choose will be dictated by the message you want to communicate. Some techniques are gay and casual, others are dignified and serious – some are rigid, others are flowing.

In design and layout you are also dealing with copy. So you can choose an art technique that contrasts excitingly with the type used for the text – or one that harmonizes with it closely and effectively.

Since most designs compete for the viewer's attention, the need for a fresh and original approach is vitally important – the proper choice of technique is essential to make your design stand out above all its rivals.

Line, for example, can be thin, brittle and wiry when that quality is called for. Or it can be broad and spirited if you want a more powerful effect. A very valuable asset of line drawing is that it reproduces well on any kind of paper. It can also be reproduced with great reduction in size.

Like line, the dry-brush technique will produce different textural effects according to the roughness of the paper and the dryness of the brush. Again like line, it reproduces easily and is very effective for impact in a broad, powerful design or drawing.

India ink used as a wash gives a good range of surface textures and effects with a particularly nice quality. If you live in an area where the tap water causes the ink to coagulate, adding a few drops of ammonia to the water will prevent this.

Wash is a transparent tint you can get with either water colors or transparent dyes. With wash you can exploit the full range of design – from the most meticulous, tight rendering to the most excitingly casual and spirited interpretation of a subject. This medium must generally be reproduced on good-quality paper.

Tempera or gouache can be used to simulate oil paintings. With it you can create a wide range of mood and effects. It is good for poster subjects that are broad and free, as well as for the most meticulous photographic rendering. The opaque quality lends itself admirably to overpainting and to many surface textures – as well as to unusual techniques in combination with other mediums.

The airbrush should be used sparingly and never by itself. You should use it only in combination with stronger structural techniques. Actually, in modern design the airbrush is used almost exclusively to obtain a flat surface devoid of brush marks. It is equally effective in modeling where brush strokes are undesirable and extremely subtle gradations are required – for example, in modeling precise mechanical surfaces.

Crayons, soft pencils or pastels are good where strong surface texture is desired. The degree of texture depends on the paper you use. Here again you have a fine technique for spirited renderings and unusual or unique textural effects. Pastels are often used in combination with other mediums – for example, to secure such effects as rough against smooth.

Lithograph crayon, when used on a smooth surface, can give you a wide range of tones – from a rich, beautiful, velvety black to very subtle gradations of gray. It is a good foil when used to enhance other mediums – such as a crisp pen line – or to complement the precision of type.

Gesso – mixed with water tempera if color is warranted – can be applied in many thicknesses, using either a brush or a palette knife. It gives a three-dimensional feeling and, if not overdone, can lead to interesting experiments in the field of illusionary three-dimensional design.

Textural tricks are another possibility. You can get many interesting textures by painting a piece of cloth, wood, or the back of linoleum or other textured material, and then pressing the wet material on your paper or your design – in rubber-stamp fashion. By cutting stencils to mask off the areas in which you do not want to add the new texture, you can control the areas you work in. Rubber rollers are also a great help when forcing the wet material against the paper. There are limitless textural possibilities and combinations at your disposal – it is fun to experiment and you may discover effects that will be very valuable to you.

Collage is an important technique for the designer. With it you can produce many textural and three-dimensional effects by pasting paper, wood, metal, or many other materials down on your drawn or painted design.

A word of caution

The important thing you must remember is that any technique is only a helping hand in the making of a good design. Technique alone can never replace a direct approach and intelligent design. Technique alone will never create anything lasting. It is wrong to think that a cleverly applied technique can make up for structural shortcomings. It will not, in the end, fool anybody – and it will only result in poor communication.

If your design is sound in approach and concept, if your idea is clearly expressed, very often the simplest technique is all you need to execute it successfully.

Lesson **18** Famous Artists Course

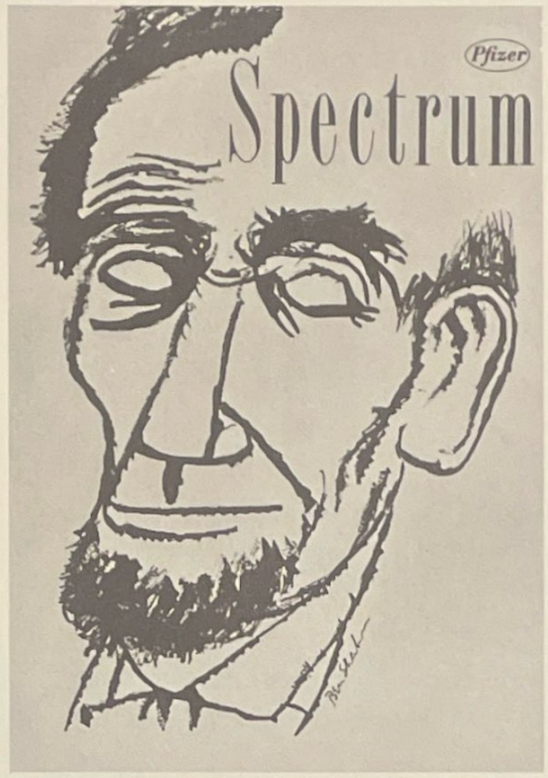
Principles of experimental design

Contrasting techniques

Courtesy Graphis Press

Here is a powerful and spirited drawing done in transparent wash against a background of fine pen lines.

Courtesy Pfizer Laboratories

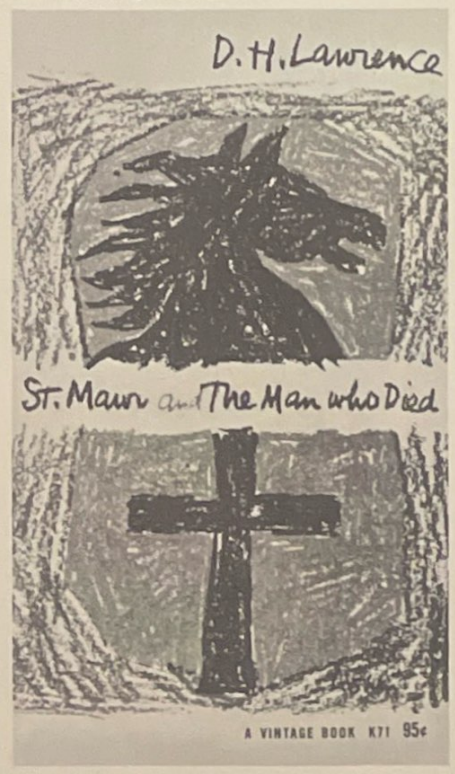


This brush drawing on rough paper has great strength, yet it can still produce a beautifully sensitive quality and spirit.

Courtesy London Transport Executive

This is an effective combination of mediums. Against a background of semi-opaque color a leaf was imprinted by stenciling and rubbing to create this tree symbol.

Courtesy Vintage Books, Inc.

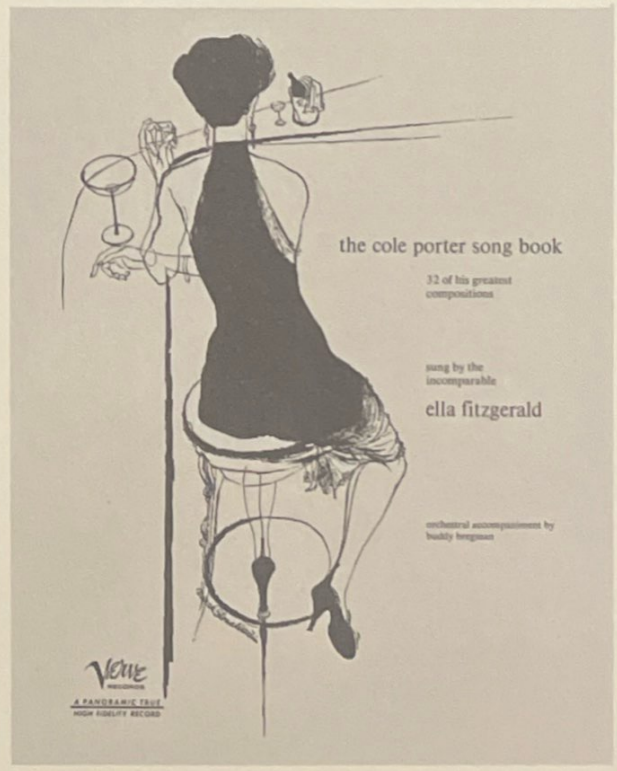


Pastel can be handled as a broad spirited medium like this — or, when necessary, it can produce the most beautiful closely related textural qualities.

Courtesy Graphis Press

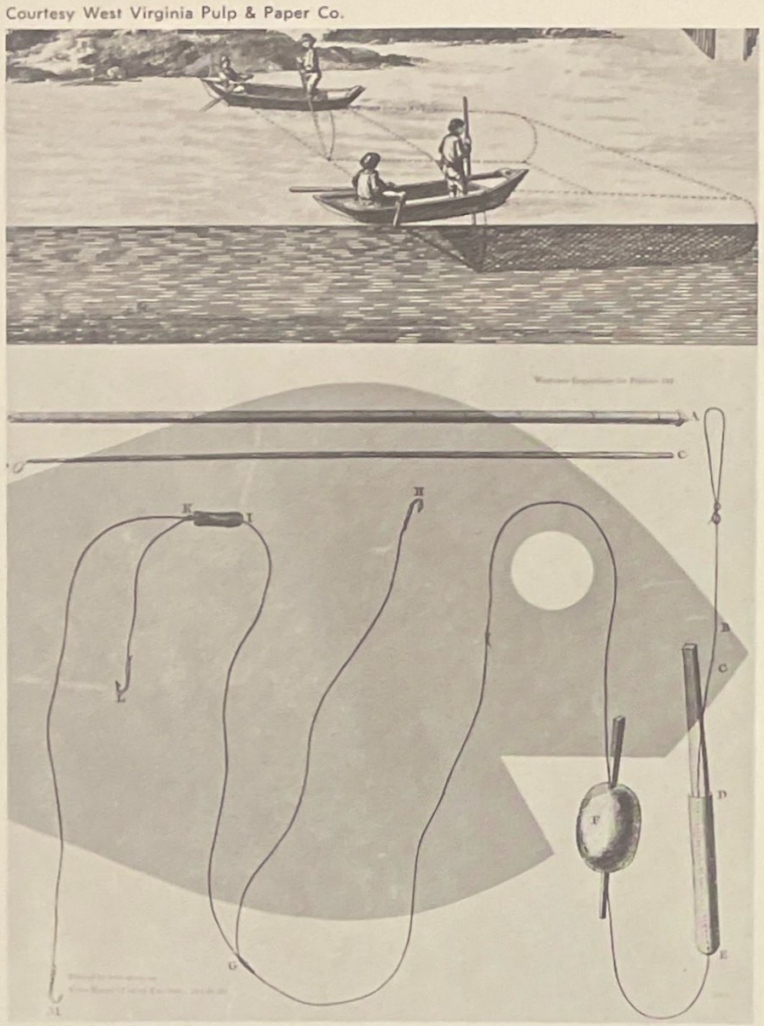
Ideally suited to this subject — a powerful opaque rendering creates a symbol of Roman antiquity through the broad textural surfaces that can be achieved with this medium.

Courtesy Verve Records, Inc.


the cole porter song book
32 of his greatest compositions
sung by the incomparable
ella fitzgerald
orchestral accompaniment by buddy bregman
VERVE
A PANORAMIC TRUE HIGH FIDELITY RECORD

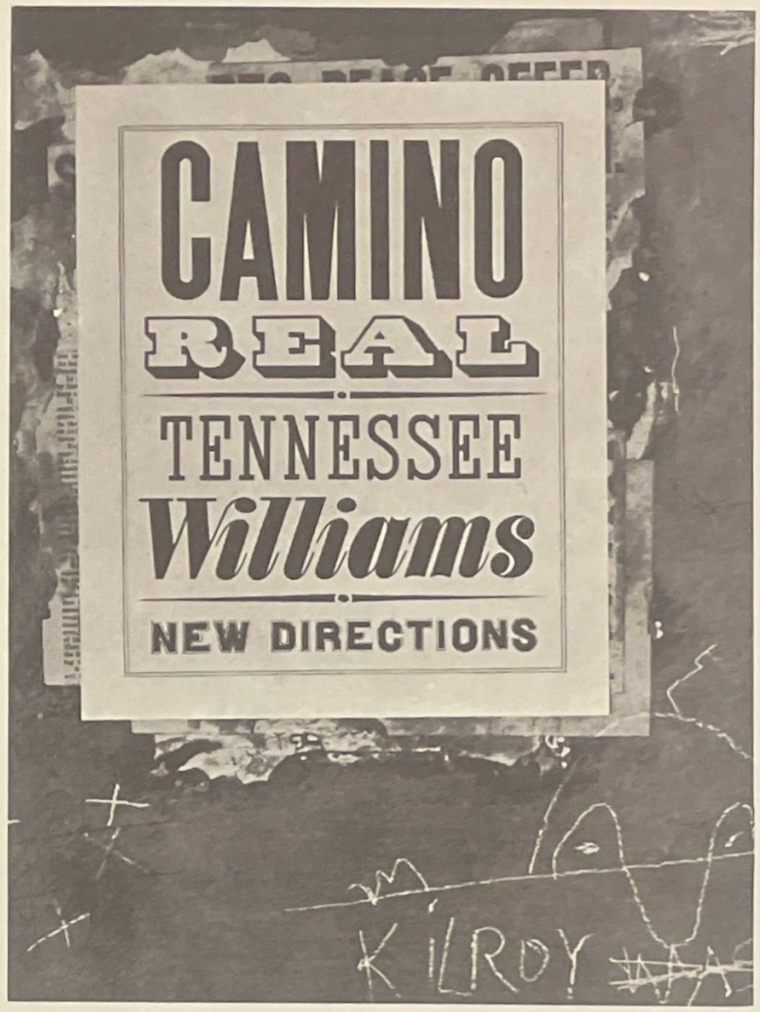
The flat mass of the black India ink is contrasted with the fine pen-line drawing to give a strong impact with a touch of sensitivity.

Courtesy West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co.



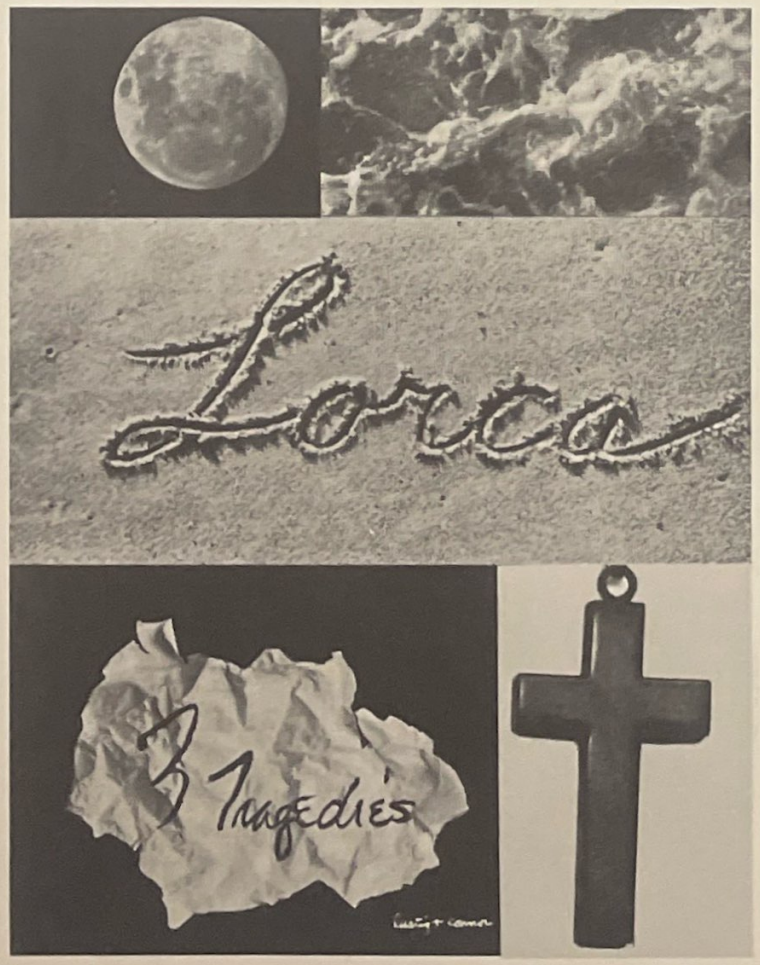
This interesting effect was achieved by combining an old engraved illustration of fishing and equipment with a contemporary flat design.

Courtesy Graphis Press



Here a poster is pasted over newspaper. The opaque background with chalk scrawls represents a wall.

Courtesy Graphis Press

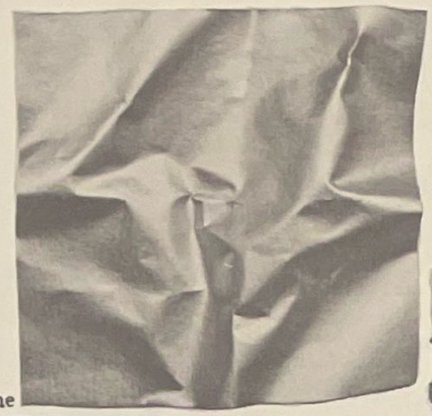


You can combine many subjects of different textures and surfaces to produce an interesting and unusual design.

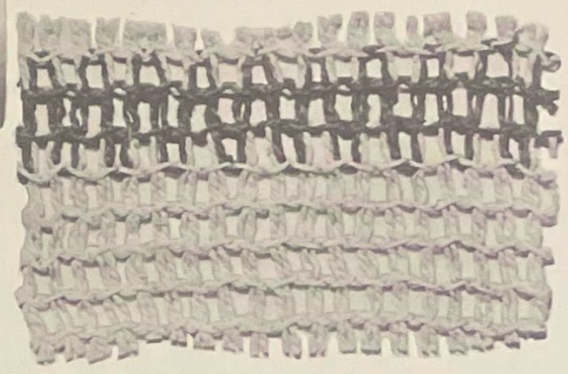
Courtesy Mademoiselle

A humorous drawing goes admirably well with the three-dimensional photographic treatment of the crayons.

Sandpaper



Tin foil

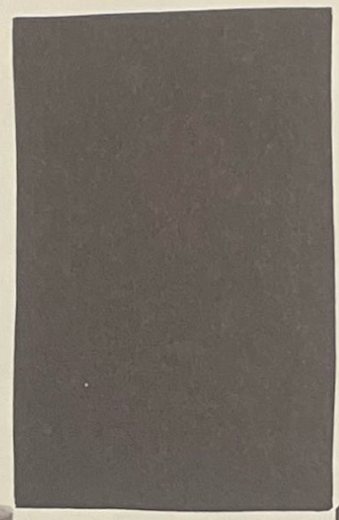


Dishcloth

row, did a fine job in the
and his mates gave him ex
lent support. Marcel, who
been up with the Rangers
two other occasions, posted
second N. H. L. shutout. He
his first in the first game
played with the Rangers
1957-58. He worked thirty-t
games that season. Last sea
he filled in for the inju
Gump Worsley in one game
Paille, called up recently
gain replace Worsley,

Newspaper

Wood



Black paper

Corrugated
cardboard

Engraving

Collage

In French, "collage" means "paste-up." When you make a collage, you create a design by pasting up bits of materials like those above — either by themselves or with a painting, drawing or some other flat surface.

The collage must stand or fall on its structural merits. The fact that you are using odd or varied materials may add to the interest of your composition but it will never conceal poor design.

In collage you can produce many exciting effects by combining a variety of unusual substances. But don't be tempted to use too many — this will confuse the layout. Limit your materials to those that most effectively communicate your idea. If, for example, you use a finely detailed old engraving as the basis of your design, you'd better apply only simple materials and flat shapes to it. The same principles hold true here as for all other good composition — you must use simple, quiet areas to complement and balance those that are busy in pattern or texture.

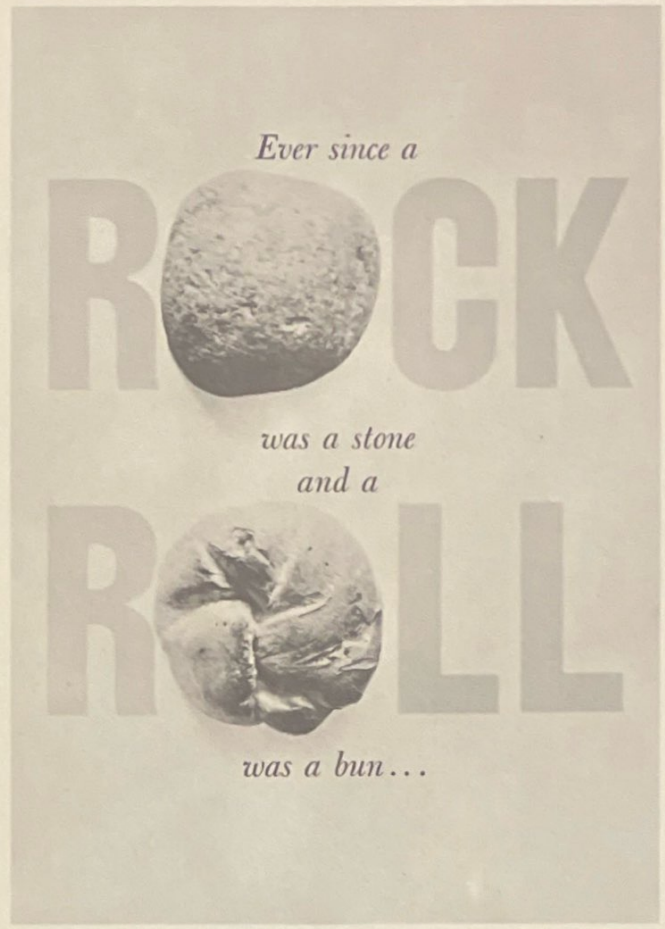
The simplest type is the flat collage — on your base you paste materials so paper-thin that they can't cast deep shadows on the background. By contrast, three-dimensional collage uses objects that have real thickness, that stand away from the surface and throw strong shadows. Here you can use pieces of wood, tin foil, glass, knitting wool, cloth — even stones and bits of metal. In fact there's almost no limit to the materials you can use imaginatively in collage.

Collage used effectively

Courtesy Graphis Press

A beautiful contrast of two textures — the two sheets of tin foil form an excellent background, while the tones of the iron implement create a strong design.

Courtesy N.Y. Life Insurance Co.



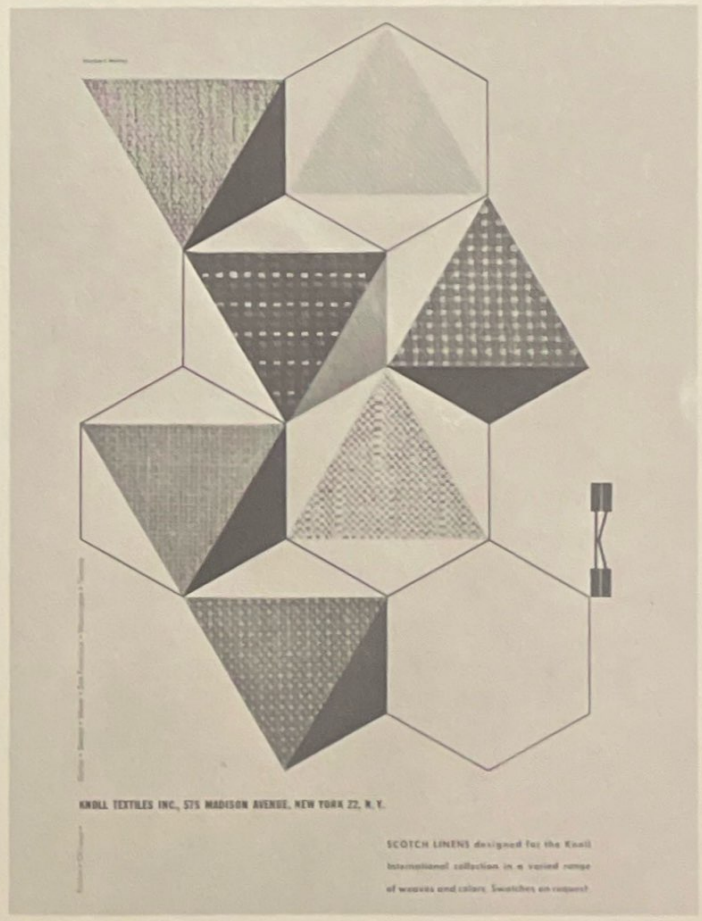
A highly creative example of collage. Here we use not only the texture, but also the shape and dimensions of the objects to communicate the idea.

Courtesy New York Times

The New York Times
WINDING ROAD FARMS AIR-CONDITIONED
GENUINE BARGAIN
WINE & LIQUOR STORE
BANK
New Yorkers discover New York through The New York Times

A very inventive use of newsprint in combination with a drawing. This was a good choice of collage material since the advertisement was for a newspaper.

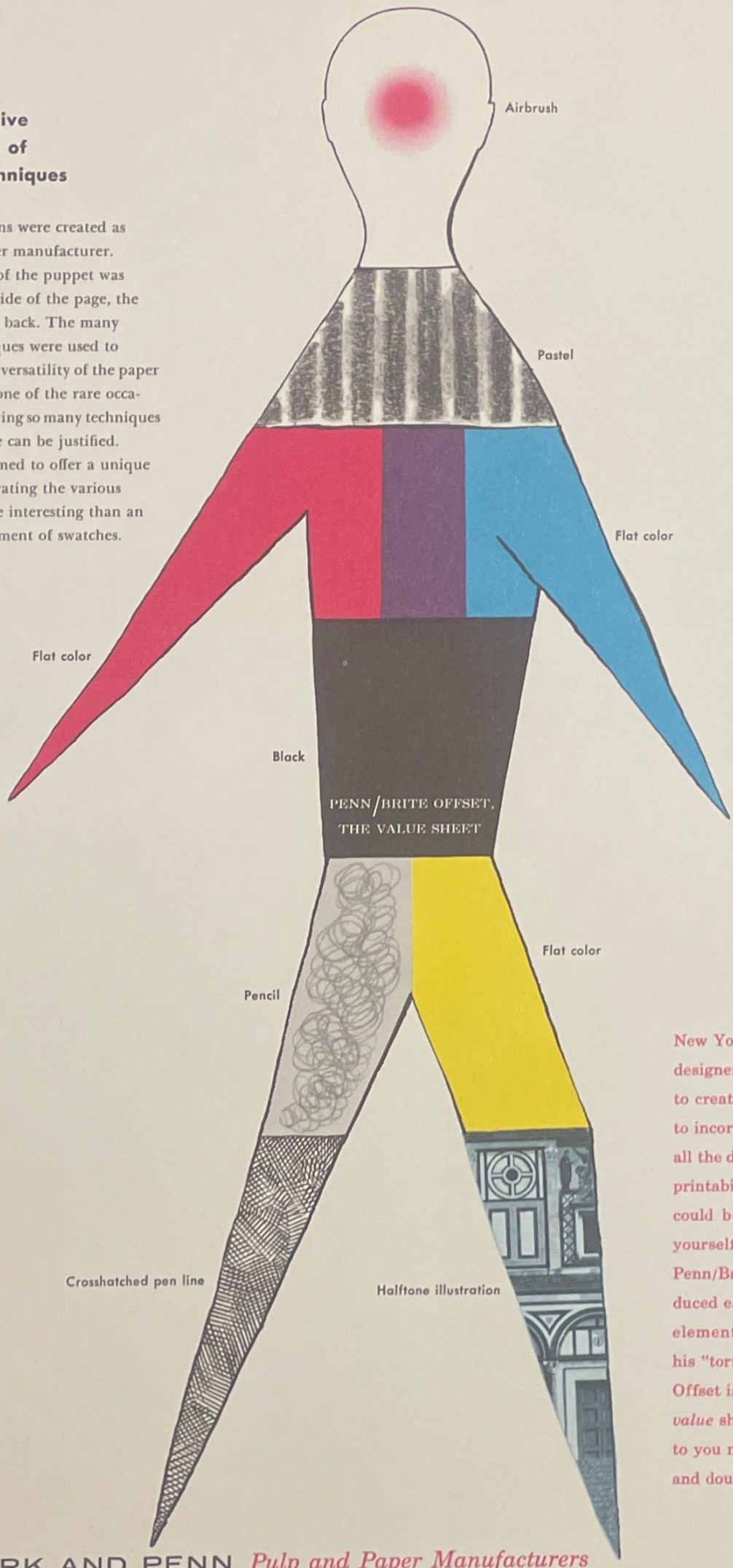
Courtesy Knoll Associates, Inc.



Upholstery fabrics — an interesting collage pattern made up of geometric shapes and bits of the materials used to cover furniture.

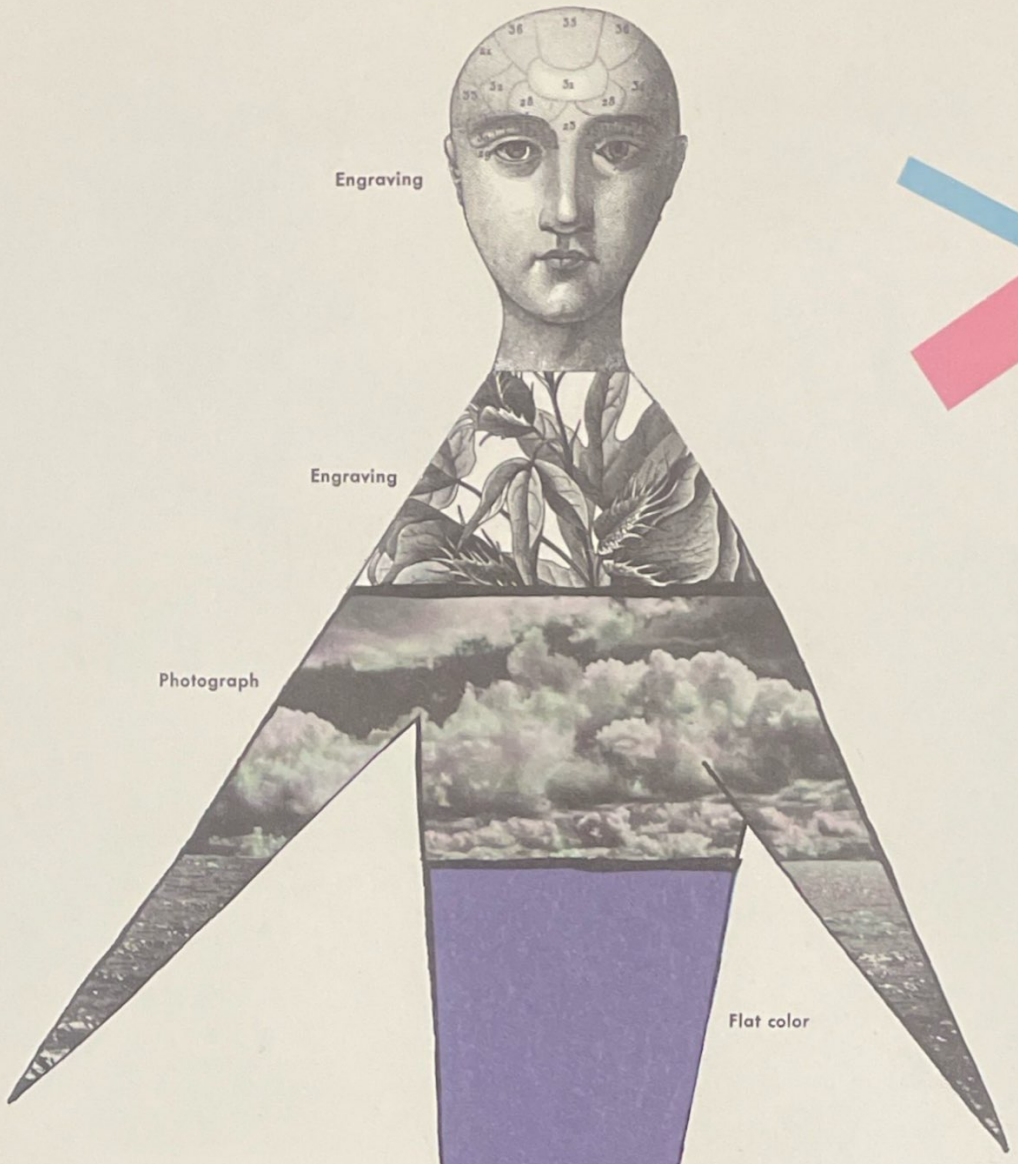
An imaginative combination of different techniques

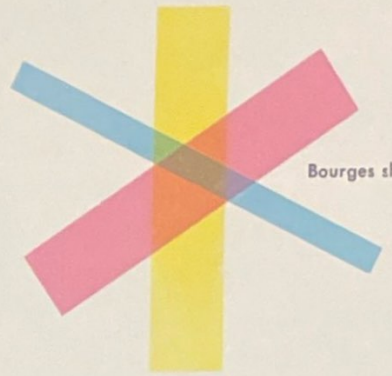
These two designs were created as an ad for a paper manufacturer. The front view of the puppet was printed on one side of the page, the rear view on the back. The many different techniques were used to demonstrate the versatility of the paper surface. This is one of the rare occasions when applying so many techniques at the same time can be justified. The puppet seemed to offer a unique way of demonstrating the various mediums — more interesting than an abstract arrangement of swatches.



NEW YORK AND PENN *Pulp and Paper Manufacturers*

New York and Penn commissioned designer George Giusti to create this insert, and to incorporate in it practically all the demands on the printability of paper which could be encountered. See for yourself how faithfully Penn/Brite Offset has reproduced each of his design elements... how well it passed his "torture test." Penn/Brite Offset is the white, bright, *value* sheet that comes to you moisturized and double-wrapped.



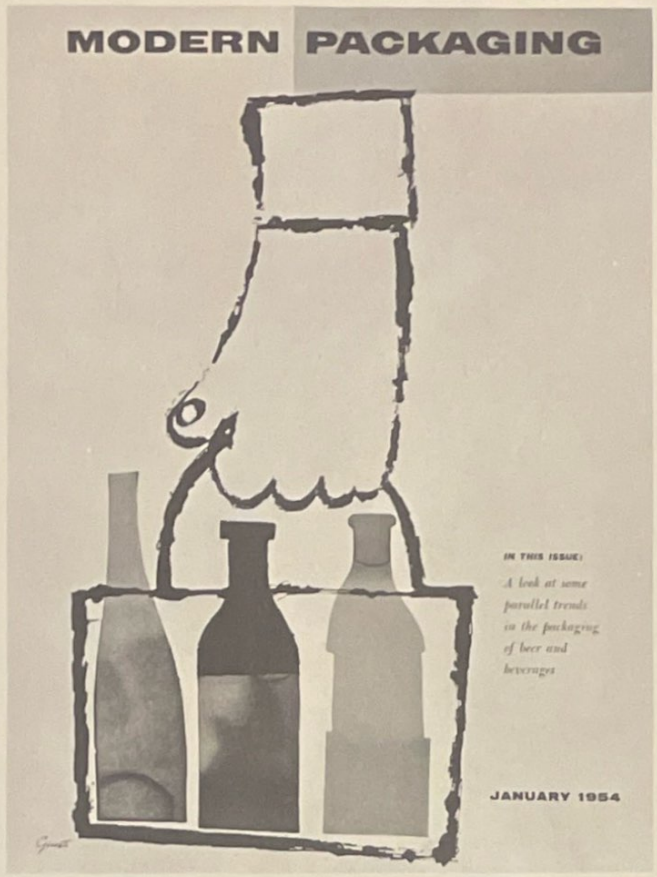


Giusti

THIS IS PENN/BRITE OFFSET • THE VALUE SHEET

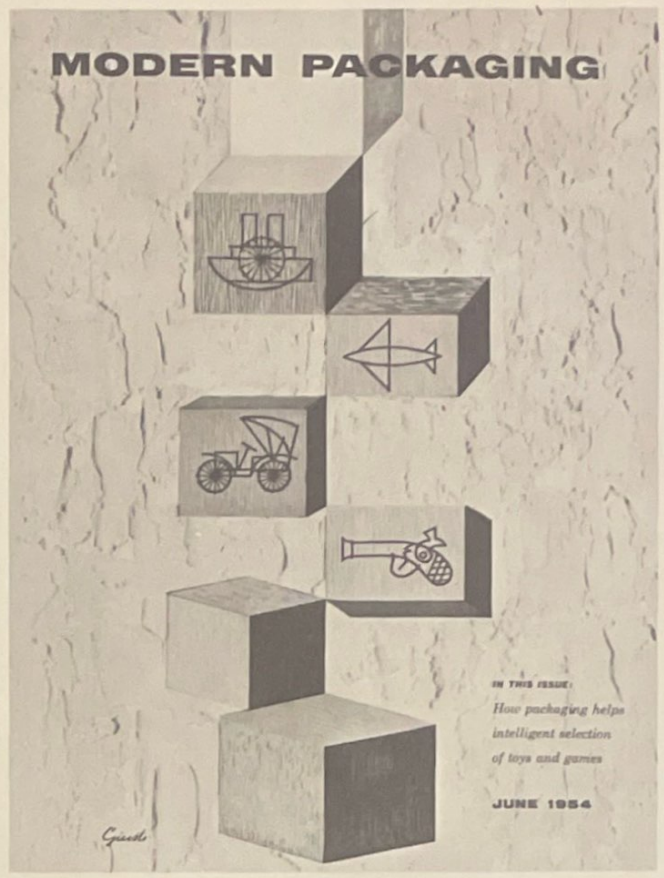
Unusual techniques that add interest

Courtesy Modern Packaging Magazine



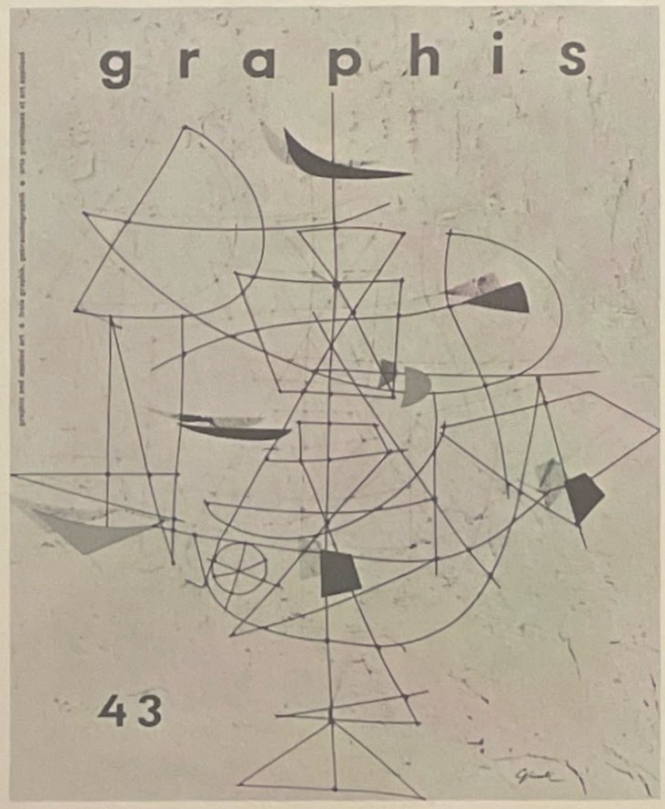
This design owes much of its interest to the sharp contrast between two very different techniques. The hand and basket are in a heavy black dry-brush line, ragged and irregular. This makes an excellent foil for the smooth tones of the transparent dyes used for the bottles, with their subtle gradations and precise edges.

Courtesy Modern Packaging Magazine



After the cubes were outlined, their areas were masked to protect the surface of the paper. To make the background, gesso medium was applied thickly in a bold, irregular manner with a palette knife. This created a rough, plastered surface — which gives an exciting textural background that contrasts with the regular geometric forms of the blocks. When the gesso was dry, the masking was removed from the blocks and they were then painted.

Courtesy Graphis Press



This is a thin, delicate pattern of copper wire and flat abstract shapes of metal, soldered together and painted black. The wire ship was set against a background of rough plastered gesso applied with a palette knife on a wooden panel. The construction was held just above the board by a few small nails, so that the shadows it cast would add further delicacy and dimension to the design.

Courtesy Graphis Press

This area was first smeared with rubber cement. Patches of the cement were then removed and gray tempera was painted over the whole thing. After the paint was dry, all the remaining rubber cement was rubbed off, leaving the interesting streaked areas of white. As a last step, the design was painted over the gray background.

This is a typical example of flat collage. Newsprint cut out of a French newspaper was tinted to make it stand out better against the white paper of the cover. The darker-toned print areas of the face and neck act as a shadow and create the illusion of simple form. Notice how the strong mass of black is used for strength, and the pure red for contrast. The blue, white and red are the colors of the French flag and the head is of the girl Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic.

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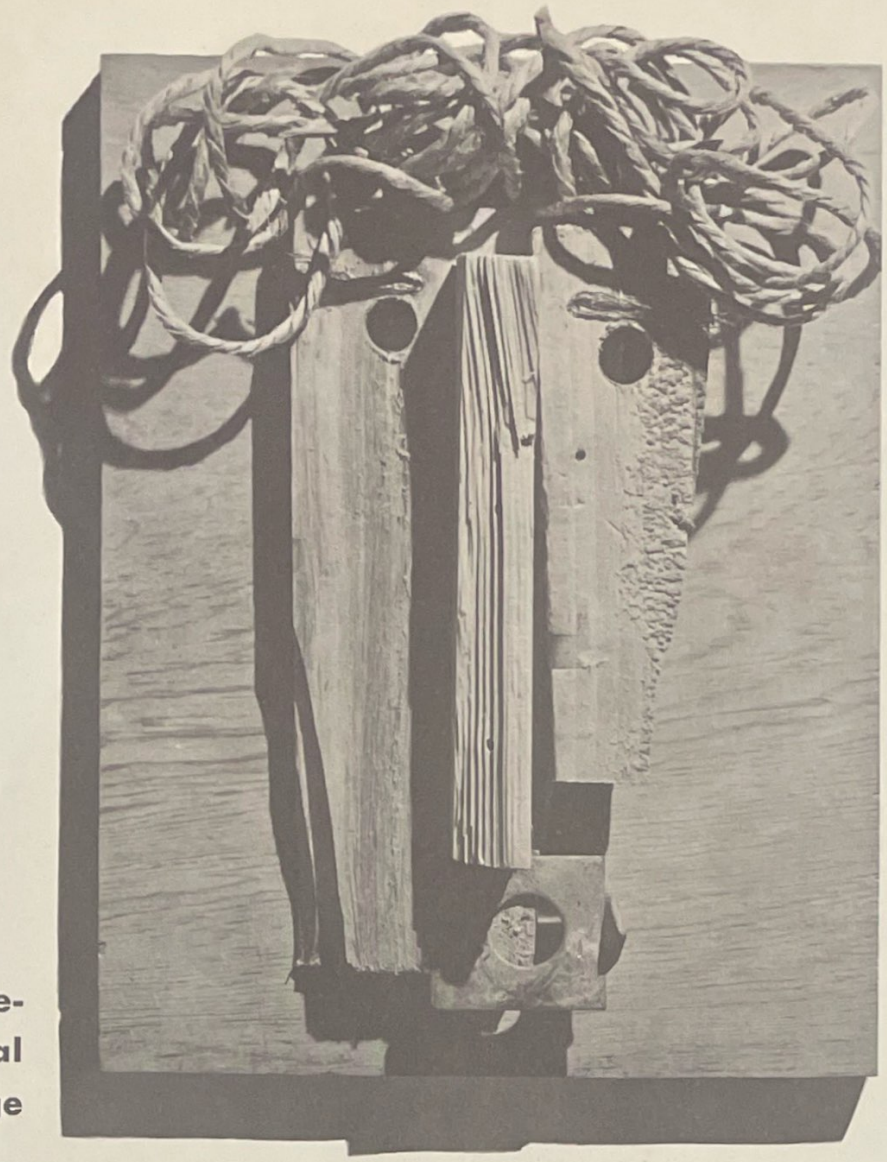
HOLIDAY

APRIL 1957 • 50c

an entire issue on France

Giusti



Three-dimensional collage

Collage can be very exciting when your materials introduce real third dimension. As with two-dimensional collage, the number of substances and textures available is enormous. Once you have produced an interesting arrangement of your elements, you can enhance the effect of your design by photography. By using light and shadow imaginatively you can create striking pictures of three-dimensional objects.

It is up to you to select the most effective materials for your collage. You must decide whether hard objects, or soft ones, or a combination of them, will best express your idea. Hard objects suggest precision, an industrial feeling. Soft materials like silk or cellophane are more suitable for a fashion or cosmetic layout.

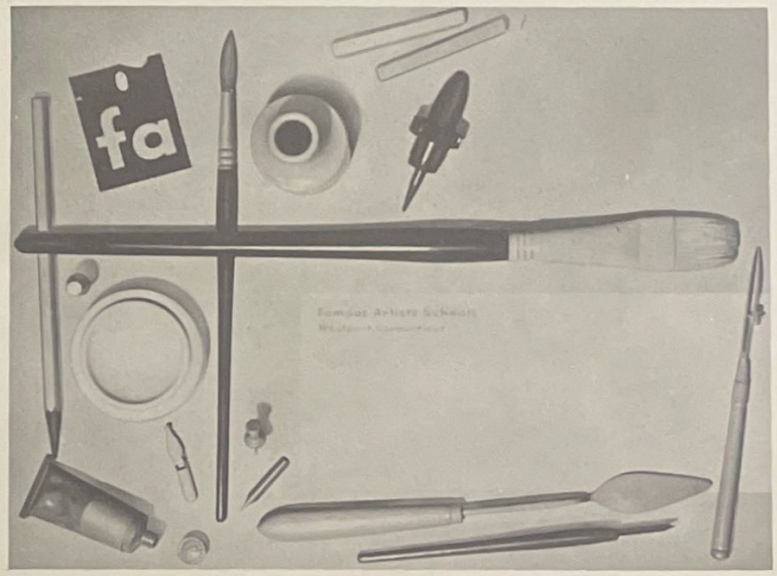
The above illustration shows how even the most commonplace materials can be used to produce a striking effect. Here you see a face made of three pieces of wood mounted on a board. A scrap of metal makes the mouth. The eyes are holes, the eyebrows bits of wire, and the hair just ordinary twine. Notice how the horizontal grain of the base board contrasts interestingly with the vertical textures of the wood face.

Using materials like these just the way you pick them up will show you what can be done. Look around and see all the interesting objects you can put together to make three-dimensional designs. If you wish, you can enhance your collages by decorating or painting them.

Three-dimensional collage is an ideal way to create designs showing products or materials, particularly those with textures.

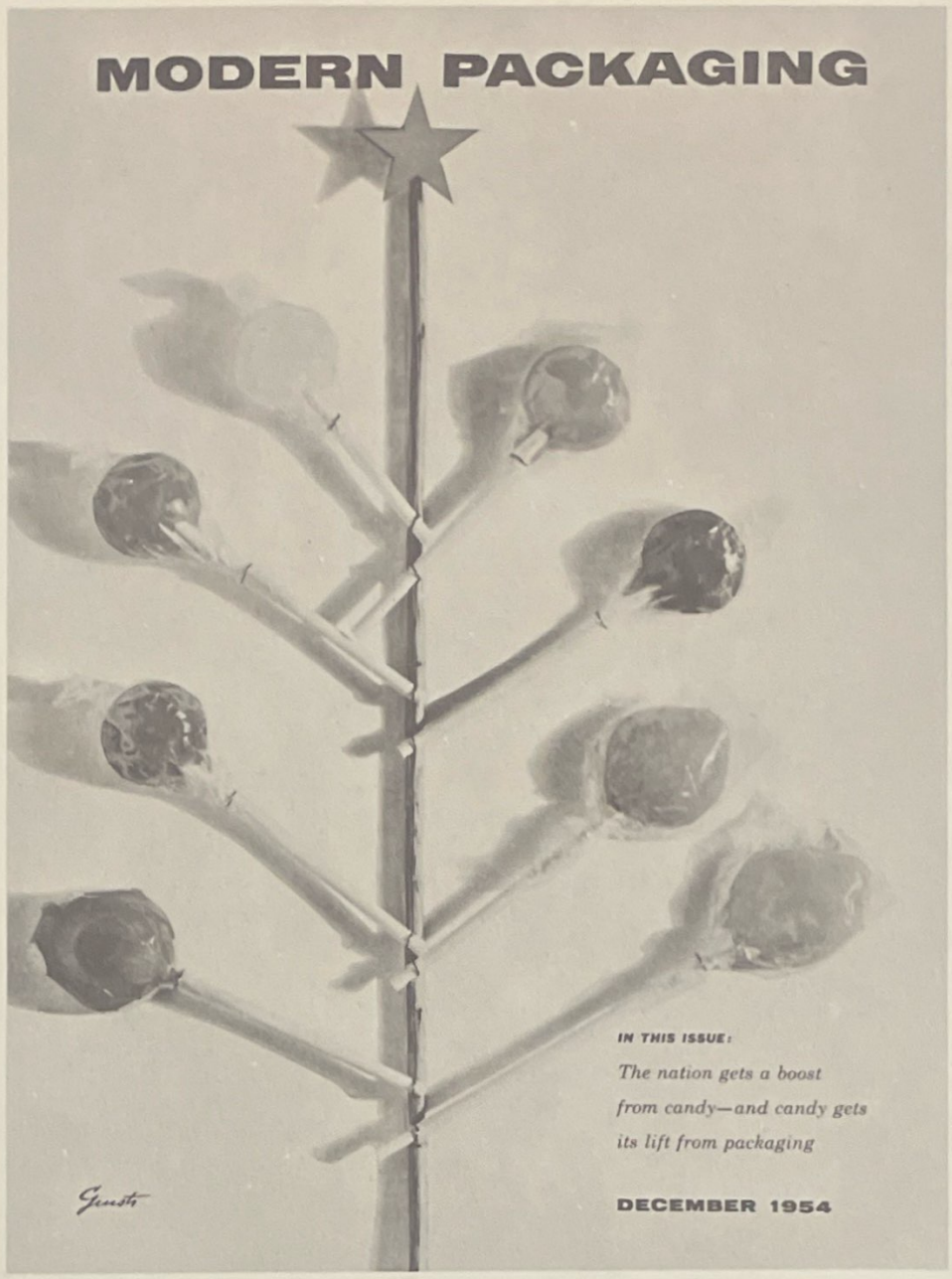
Practical use of three-dimensional design

This design is for a mailing envelope sent to prospective students of our School's Fine Arts Course. We wanted to stimulate their desire to paint. So we squeezed several bright little blobs of different colors onto the palette in a well-planned arrangement — and then photographed the whole thing in full color, using the light and shadow to accentuate the textures and the three-dimensional appearance of the objects. This presentation is made much more convincing by photographing the articles in their true size and brilliant tones.



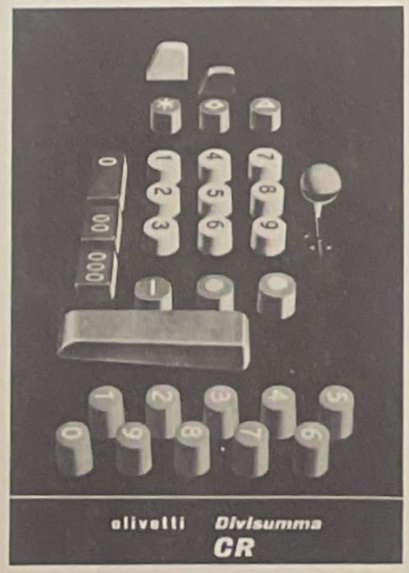
On this mailing envelope for the Famous Artists Schools we sought to create a convincing illusion of reality — we wanted to make the tools of the artist's trade look so real that the person receiving it would feel the urge to reach right out and pick them up. By using a large envelope we added to the realism by showing the objects in their natural size. To get our desired effect, we dipped the tools in various brilliant tones of shiny enamel and then arranged them on a light gray background. Then we photographed the composition, using the light and shadow to bring out the roundness, the third dimension of the various articles. The result is a highly effective design.

Courtesy Modern Packaging Magazine



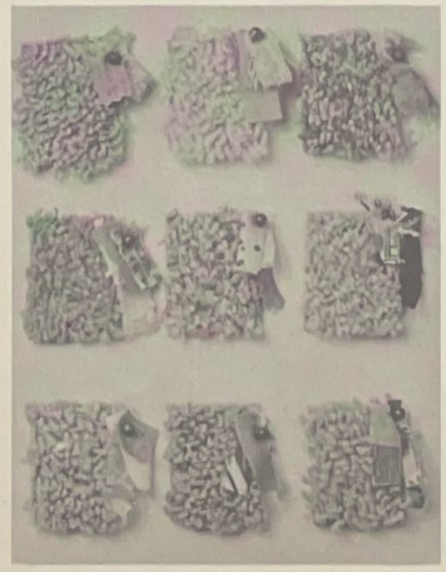
A good example of three-dimensional collage creates a happy symbol of Christmas. The actual lollipops were printed in gay bright colors — to represent the decorations on a Christmas tree. At the same time they communicate the idea that the lollipops are protected by modern packaging.

Courtesy Olivetti Corp. of America



In this assignment for Olivetti the artist arranged the actual keys of a computing machine to make an interesting three-dimensional design on a black background.

Courtesy Celanese Corp. of America



The bodies of the humorous little dogs in this design are made from actual swatches of carpeting. The head and ears are pieces of drapery fabric held in place with a map pin that also serves as an eye. The coarse texture of each swatch stands out against the plain smooth background. The cast shadows add to the three-dimensional effect.

Courtesy M. Flax

Blocks of wood with different textures make a logical collage for an art materials firm showing its samples to woodcarvers.

Courtesy The Guitar Review

Humor in design

Humor can often be just as valuable in designing a layout as it is in our everyday lives. To be amusing, a drawing doesn't have to be an outright cartoon – but injecting a humorous note can add impact to a strong design. This will often get a response from an audience which would not react to a serious approach. The layout does not have to laugh out loud – sometimes just the subtle feeling of a smile will catch the viewer's interest.

The free drawing above is the cover design for a music magazine called *The Guitar Review*. The intention was to be light and gay, without trying for a belly laugh.

Here, a loose brush line draws the girl's face and neck in a vase form, directly on a blank sheet of ruled music paper. The informal technique used for the head is in strong contrast to the mechanical uniformity of the horizontal lines in the background.

The gray shape of the lute standing on end at the left was printed in red. It acts as a form of shadow on the face. The flowers in the vase serve at the same time as hair – if you wish to view it that way.

All of the designs on these two pages lend themselves to humorous interpretations. You can readily see that if the illustrations and the designs had been done in a realistic manner, they would have been ridiculous. But the humorous note permits the artist many liberties in design which he could not take with a literal interpretation. Note how every example on the next page is directly related to the advertiser's problem of communicating his message clearly to his audience.

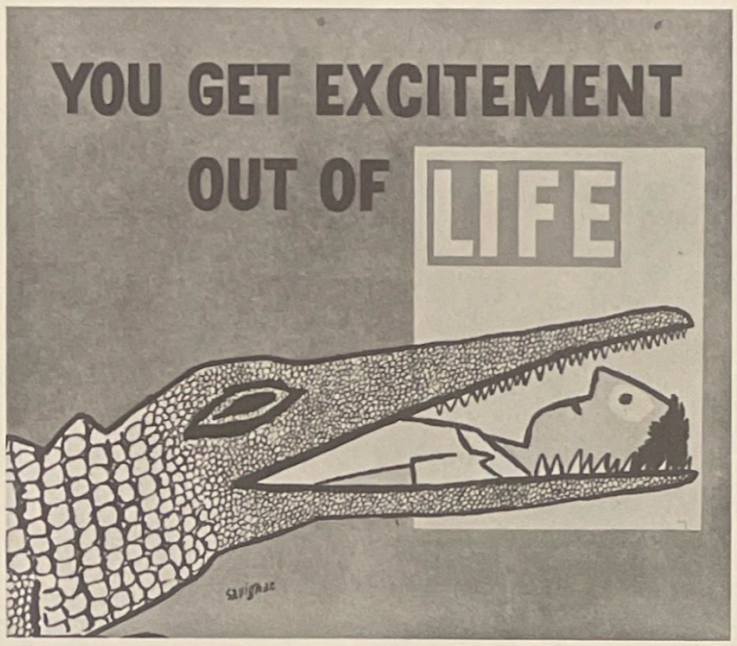
Courtesy The Chase Manhattan Bank

Bank advertisement

Courtesy Chicago Tribune

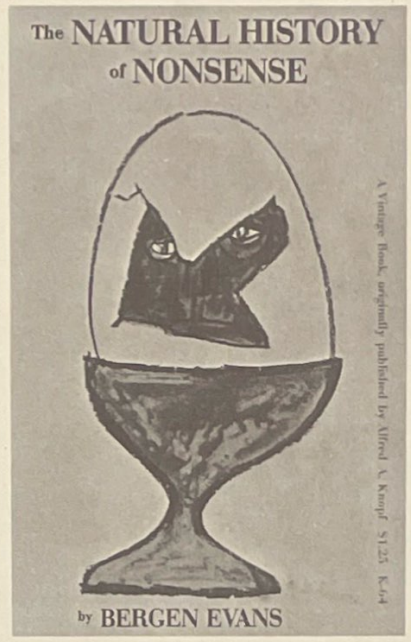
Billboard for Chicago *Sunday Tribune*

Courtesy Life Magazine



Billboard for *Life* magazine

Courtesy Vintage Books, Inc.



Book jacket

Courtesy Church English Shoes

Shoe advertisement

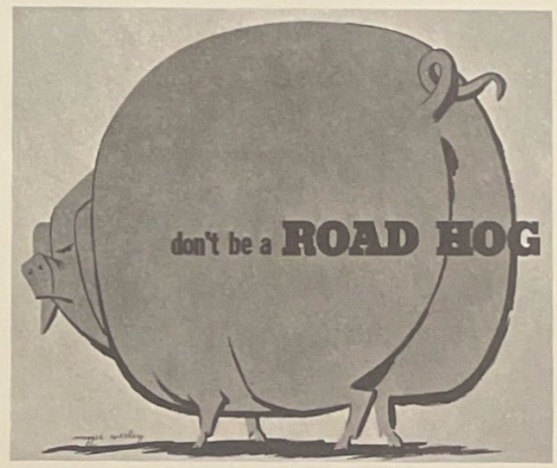
Kool cigarettes billboard

Courtesy Graphis Press

Movie poster

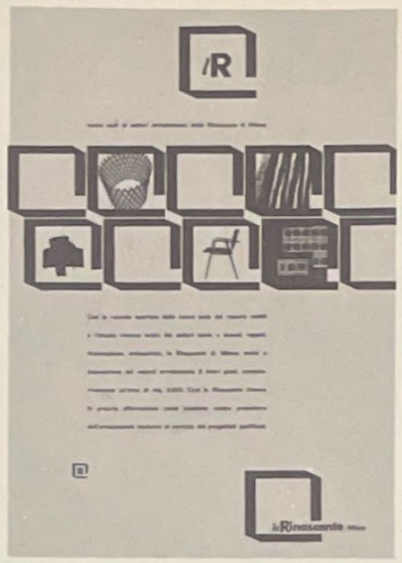
Courtesy The Observer, Ltd.

Poster

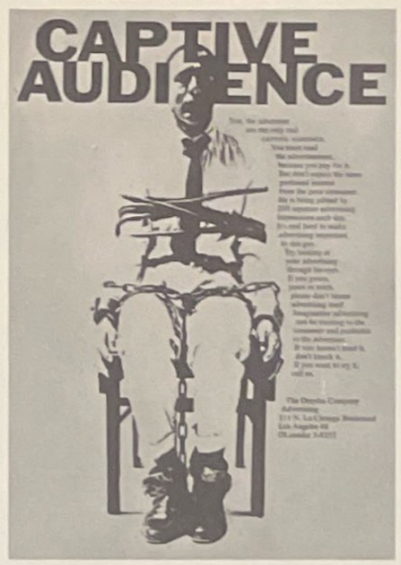


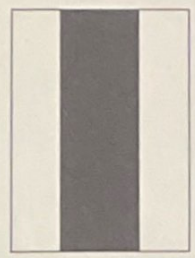
Poster

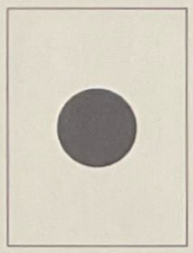
Courtesy Graphis Press



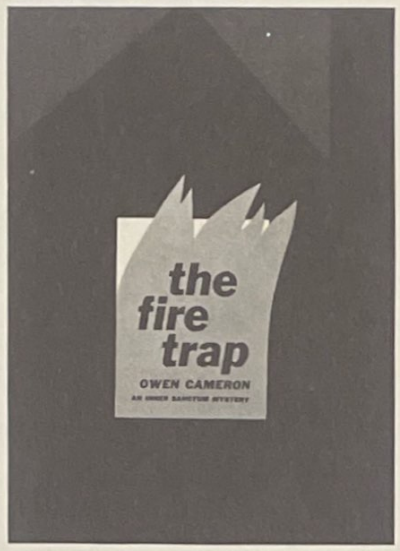
Designed by Norman Gollin; The Dreyfus Co.



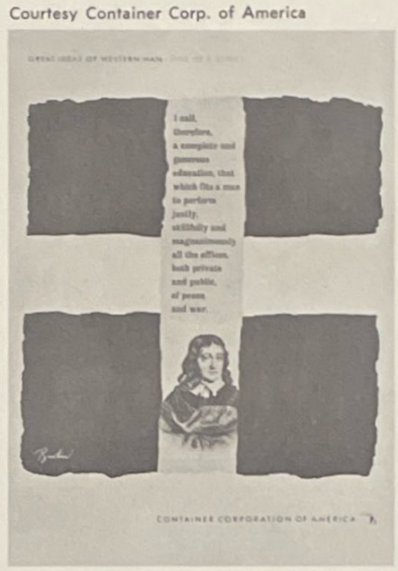


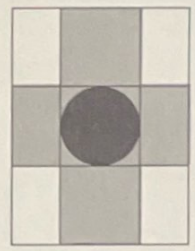


Courtesy Simon and Schuster, Inc.

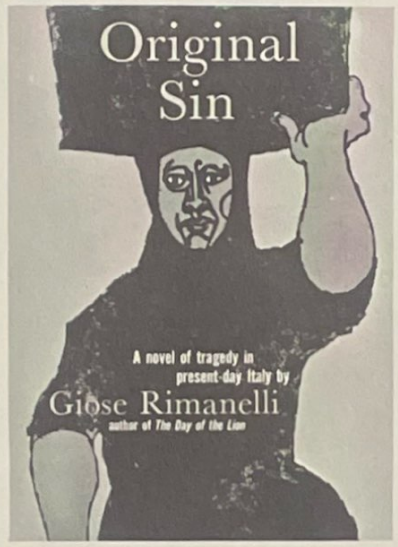


Courtesy Container Corp. of America

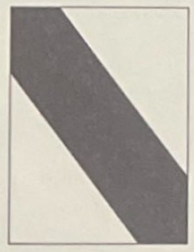




Courtesy Random House, Inc.

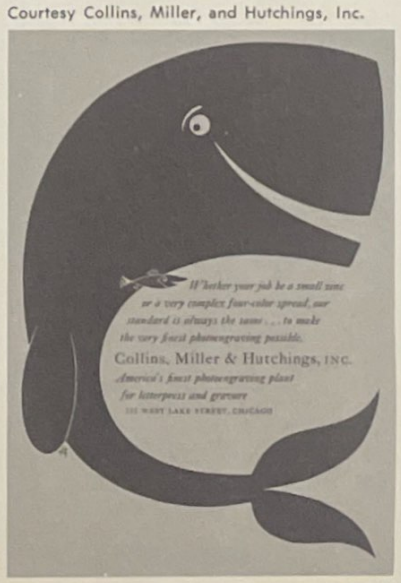


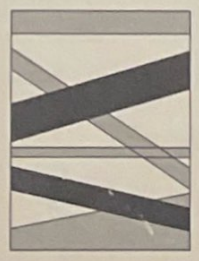
Courtesy Print Magazine



Courtesy Herman Miller Furniture Co.

Courtesy Collins, Miller, and Hutchings, Inc.





Here we show you several practical applications of the basic principles of layout and design introduced to you in this lesson. Compare each layout with the diagram next to it and notice how closely the fundamental formulas have been adhered to. You can take many liberties in the construction of a design as long as you base it on a sound foundation and system.

FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE
Student work
Lesson 18
Principles of experimental design

HOW TO PRACTICE AND PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON

This lesson demonstrates the value of simplicity and shows you how to reduce complicated subjects to essentials. It also shows you the value of experimenting with various techniques and points out basic arrangements you can use as a starting point for any design or layout.

As you read through this lesson and study the designs in it, pay particular attention to the sizes, shapes and positions of the elements within the page or design space. Notice that these elements are a certain size, no bigger, no smaller -- and they are carefully placed in the best position. Keep in mind that although many of these design examples appear extremely simple -- they are not. Each one has been done and redone with a critical eye toward the best selection or use of each element. Just as moving a hand one-quarter of an inch away from the body may mean the difference between a clear, convincing gesture and confusion in a figure drawing, so may an equally small adjustment in a design mean the difference between beauty and mediocrity.

Here are some specific study and practice suggestions which will help you get the most from this design lesson:

1. Cut out of black, gray or colored paper some simple shapes similar to those on page 7. Try to create balanced and interesting designs by moving these shapes around within different spaces, some vertical, some horizontal. Concentrate on the effect they create in combinations. Each time you move them, study them and ask: Is it interesting? Does it have movement? Is it too bare? Too crowded? Monotonously spaced? Are all the elements too much the same size or shape?

2. Make a number of simple color designs which include effective use of black as demonstrated on pages 14 and 15. They can be for posters or the covers of paperback books or catalogs.

3. Select some complicated pictures or designs and reduce them to simple, bold designs as shown in the demonstrations on pages 16 through 21.

4. Try out combinations of techniques in a single design like the examples on pages 24 and 25, 28, 29 and 30. Make some collages out of various materials such as those suggested on pages 26 and 27.

THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU ARE TO SEND IN FOR CRITICISM

ASSIGNMENT 1. Make four different designs using any four of the eight basic arrangements shown on page 2. Your subject is the season of spring. Choose an element or elements that say "spring" quickly and clearly. These elements may be different for each picture, as long as they are appropriate for spring. You may do these in color or in black and white. Use any medium or technique you wish.

If you choose to do a collage, make it a two-dimensional collage that is suitable for mailing. Be sure that each part of it is firmly attached to your mounting or illustration board. Do not send in any three-dimensional collages for either Assignment 1 or 2.

Write the name of the basic arrangement beneath each design -- for example, centered, vertical, diagonal, etc. Page 36 shows you how these basic designs can be used for a variety of subjects. Don't feel that your design must correspond exactly or rigidly to the basic designs shown on page 2.

What we want to see is a design that has a predominantly horizontal or vertical or centered feeling. Look at the examples on page 36 and give particular attention and thought to the last sentence in the caption.

Make each design about 4 x 5 inches and do them on one piece of 11 x 14-inch illustration board.

Mark this board -- ASSIGNMENT 1.

ASSIGNMENT 2. Make a design that symbolizes one of the following subjects:

Gardening
Fishing
Sports car racing
Sailing
Home building
Rail transportation

Make your design 8 x 12 inches (either horizontal or vertical). You may do it in any technique you wish. If it is a collage, be sure the finished art is suitable for mailing. Write the name of your subject under your design.

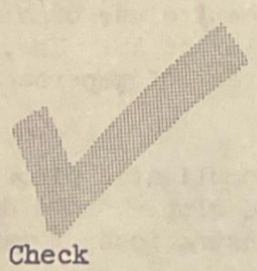
(over, please)

Before doing this assignment, be sure you have researched the problem thoroughly. The elements you choose for your design should above all be strong, quickly recognizable symbols of the subject. Take advantage of all of your picture space to get the idea of your design over clearly and forcefully. Remember the value of simplicity -- don't put so many things in the design that they complicate or confuse it. Do this on a piece of 11 x 14-inch illustration board.

Mark this board -- ASSIGNMENT 2.

In criticizing your work, we will be particularly interested in:

--Your understanding of the basic principles shown on page 2.
--Your ability to reduce a realistic subject to the essentials of a design.
--Your use of effective and interesting techniques.



Check
before mailing

IMPORTANT: Be sure to letter your name, address and student number neatly at the lower left-hand corner of each assignment. In the lower right corner, place the lesson number and assignment number.

Your lesson carton should contain:

Assignment 1
Assignment 2
1 Return shipping label filled out completely

Mail this carton to:
FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE, WESTPORT, CONN.